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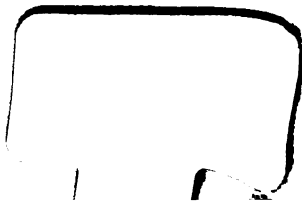
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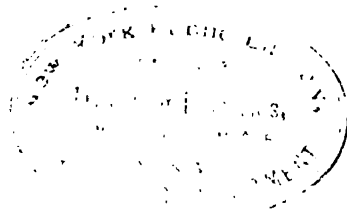
In further Ardenne

Thomas Henry Passmore



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1911





THE DANCING PROCESSION AT ECHTERNACH

[*Frontispiece*]

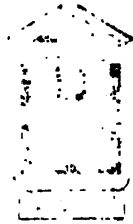
IN

A GUIDE TO THE
GRAND DUCHY OF LUXEMBOURG

BY THE

REV. J. H. PASSMORE, M.A.
Author of "The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg"
and "The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg"

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS & MAPS



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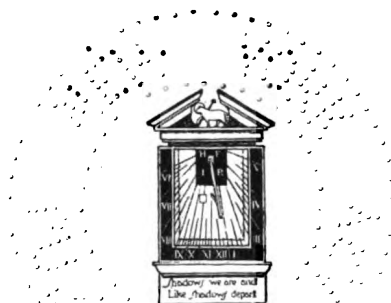
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Author of "The Sacred Vestments," "The Things beyond the Tomb"
etc. etc.

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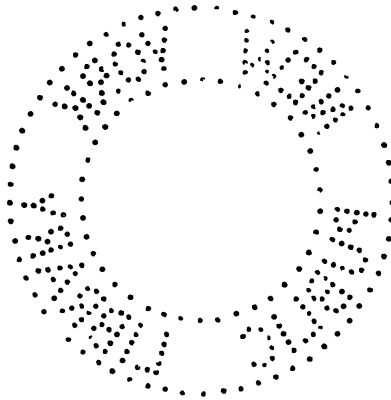
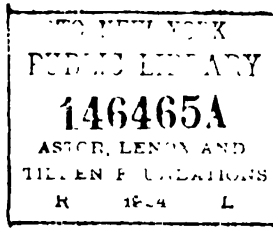
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"Tout paysage est un état d'âme"

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DEDICATED TO
CICELY
MY WIFE ✓
AND CO-EXPLORER
OF THESE LEAFY VALES
AND LUCID STREAMS

1524

JUN

ASPER FROM C. O

PREFACE

THE little country which this book purports to sketch is virgin to most tourists and by the average Briton conjectured of but hazily. Some of my friends think Luxembourg is a railway station in Paris. Being under this impression it is but natural that they should be at a loss to imagine how it can fill any romantic place in history, or offer any natural beauty to the descriptive pen. Perhaps there may be some Londoners who think Waterloo is a terminus too and nothing more. If such there be, they must be, in these days of "education," invigorating persons to meet. But I hasten to assure the reader that the Luxembourg is neither a terminus nor a museum, except in the sense that it forms a charming objective to a longish railway journey, and reserves for the curious many pleasant little caprices of nature and suggestive shreds of antiquity.

Other friends, quite enlightened, who have passed through the Luxembourg in a train on the way to Switzerland and consequently know all about it that there is to know, are anxious to be informed what I can possibly find to say on the subject. Well, what I have found to say follows hereinafter. If they value their anxiety at the price of this work, solace is now within their reach. Others again, ramblers and anglers, who join with me in my appre-

ciations, are concerned with the thought that I shall draw tourists to the place and spoil it. It has enjoyed so far, they urge, a tolerable immunity from these trying hordes, possibly by reason that the excellent Baedeker, who conscientiously mirrors every feature of every place in the world except its spirit, passes this region over in half-a-dozen pages. Beaten-track itineraries have this way with them. I remember that a certain important Guide-Book dismisses exquisite Volterra of Tuscany with a luminous note to this effect: "Nothing worth seeing here"! and the alabaster caves are there. This lordly *laissez aller*, then, has helped towards the seclusion of the Luxembourg; and I am told I shall deflower with Philistine invasion. But I have little fear that the sort of persons who may be attracted by this *esquisse* of mine are likely to import unpleasantness into any country.

A fourth group are under the impression that I have been writing a Guide-Book. They are wrong. I resent their base suspicions. Of course there is no disgrace in writing a Guide-Book. There is art in it. But such a task has not been my idea in the least. In fact, I have done my best to make the book, from the "Guide" point of view, irritatingly useless. The idea is not to pilot you about the country in the flesh. Should parts of the book prove useful for such a purpose, that is accidental. We all make mistakes sometimes. The idea is to pay your fare for you, so to speak, and take you there, and present you to its beauties and interests and simple kindly folk, without troubling you to move out of your chair. My book doesn't

map out any "Excursions for Ten Days." It leaps from place to place with confusing haphazardness. It speaks rudely of cherished tourist ideas. It revels in things that any self-respecting Guide-Book would pass over in silent contempt. It gives no fares, hotel-tariffs, *renseignements pratiques*, or time-tables. The words "quaint" and "picturesque" are avoided in it except where no other words would do. It is neither instructive nor improving. Above all it assumes, in the reader, legs and heart for walking, a love of unspoilt uncrowded sweet earth-corners, an open mind about other people's religious notions, and even the capacity to think a little occasionally, in a dreamy way. Is this too much? If so, I fear I shall be written down a bore.

Of course, if you are going to draw comparisons with Switzerland, Tyrol and so forth; if you be a votary of what Kingsley calls "the idol of space": I am done. But beauty does not exclusively reside with the largest mountain, the deepest valley. "Beauty, if you will consider wisely, consists in form, and not in size"; and in these gracious winding vales of mine there is a quiet restful tenderness of feeling which one misses in many a grander scene. And I propose that we should get behind the Maya of size and distance, and ask somewhat particularly at the open secrets of this little land, where Druid flamen, Celtic war-man, Roman lording, and feudal baron have in so clear and various characters written *FUIMUS*. "Whether is better" (again Kingsley) "to know many places ill, or to know one place well?"

The hunter of sights will get small joy of these unpre-

tending ancients. He that seeketh sensation shall lose sensibility. I talk to those who taste spiritually, rather than sensationally, places, and the fine humours that flavour them ; and that leisurely. Such sort of epicure knows, as cats know, that this *Ortsgefühl* stands not in bustle, or luxury, or amusement, but thrives best in primitive and very sleepy places ; that intense life kills it, or transmutes it into mere vulgar magnetism ; that it breathes from what has been, rather than from what is, and yet is not antiquarianism, history, or geography, any more than music is acoustics or poetry prosody.

Wherefore, let the blasé man of towns, and the dupe of speed and magnitude, and he who carries on his back into all the world a whole Great Britain of prim protestant prejudices, eschew Echternach, and Vianden, and Clervaux, and all old languorous ingles of the kind, for their as for his own weal ; and, betaking him to that globe-girdler of Ludgate—whom I have found so ubiquitously courteous for ten years, and who I am sure must be mentioned somewhere in the Minor Prophets—compass sea and land in search of one prosy sight. But you, dear Nature-loving reader of simple joys ! get quick into the astral plane, and take my hand, and we will wander together in a place of leaves and streams, an old land, “wide, and quiet, and peaceable.”

T. H. P.

3 HYDE PARK MANSIONS, LONDON, W.

June 1st, 1905

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IN FURTHER ARDENNE

CHAPTER I

THE ROUGH-HEWING

THE Grand Duchy of Luxembourg is like little Thor among the Jötuns. It is wedged in between three countries. Belgium elbows it on the west, straddling Prussia, on the east, jostles it haughtily; from the south-west a flange of France comes up and nozzles it; and on the south it is crowded by Lorraine. It is like Alice with the Queens pillowed on her shoulders; only they are not asleep. There are a thousand square miles of it, about as much as there is of Cheshire; it is fifty miles through at longest and thirty at broadest; and its shape, a worried triangle, is something that of England turned the wrong way. Its population is about 237,000, or less than one-twentieth that of London. So it is quite the tiniest of minnows among the tritons of Europe.

And yet this little country is neither French, Belgian, nor German, nor a mixture of the three, but has an entirely distinctive physical, racial, and ethical character of its own; reflects a powerful and glorious past; and, save only that it is not licensed to carry fire-arms or to take sides in war, is as much an independent State as England or France. It is a kingdom hereditary among the males of the Nassau family; and its king, though called Grand Duke, is a monarch right out—in the constitutional sense, like our

own great Sovereign. The last Grand Duke was William III. of Orange-Nassau, King of the Netherlands. He, finding one crown sufficiently heavy, handed over the reins of the little principality to his brother, Prince Henry. The prince died, and the king resumed his responsibilities until his own death in 1890, which exhausted the males of the Ottonian branch of the Nassaus. Whereupon, Salic law of male inheritance barring out Holland's present Queen Wilhelmina, succession fell to the elder or Walramian branch of the family, in person of Adolf Wilhelm August Karl Friederich, Duke of Nassau, who is present independent sovereign of Luxembourg.

This latter is now eighty-seven years old, and has one son, Wilhelm. The children of William and his wife, who was Princess Anna of Braganza, are like the olive-branches round about their table. Seven daughters have arrived, and for more perfectly polished corners the temple of Orange could not wish ; but alas, no male arrow hurtles in the giant's hand. Hence deep searchings of every patriotic heart, for there looms a disagreeable possibility—ingurgitation by the great German sponge. I cannot paint the state of popular feeling more aptly than in words uttered to me by a responsible and far from captious native :—*"J'ai peur que dans quelques années ces sales Prussiens ne nous absorbent."* They love the Germans as the Dutch love the sea.

I am now going to make a sketch of this little country's history. It is interesting. It is the lore of a land which, trodden down by the feet of the nations in succession, and recording like an aneroid or a brain-cell the impressions wrought by each shock in turn, has yet never for a moment lost its distinctive individuality ; just as a face, lined and wrinkled with age and cares, may look out through them all, not materially changed, the face of childhood. The

best place to begin is the beginning ; with a prayer to the reader that he may overskip, with condoning eye, such familiar generalisations as may be found needful for the picture's filling-in. For it is no easy task to trace, through the infinitely-tangled skein of European history, this single tenuous thread.

The Celts, that wide vague branch of the great Aryan race, with its hidden germ of intellectual and social destinies, have left strong traces in this tract of ancient Gaul. Beside certain dolmens and other monuments, of which we shall speak in their place ; beside Gaulish coins, rare in other parts, in some hundreds of varieties ; utensils and weapons in bronze, iron, and stone are still coming to the light. The diorite and serpentine, not indigenous, of which some of these are made, argue a certain commercial development ; the late stone knives witness the conservatism of the Druid, who, tenacious as are all priests of ancient custom everywhere, objected to metal cutlery as a giddy innovation, and carved his victims with flint choppers to the last. In Druidical burial-mounds have been found things Greek ; at Hellange, a bronze mask and a beautiful cup of glass and enamel recalled some Gallic invasion of Greece.

A less conventional Celtic souvenir is the *mardelle*. This is a round pit from ten to thirty yards in diameter, once a lake. In the middle of the water, upon piles driven deep into the ground, rested a large disc of wood covered with beaten clay ; on the clay stood a round, wooden thatched hut ; in this rudimentary Moated Grange lived the Lake-Dweller, comparatively secure from the wolves, hyænas, lynxes, bears, elks, wild-boars, and possibly a mammoth or so which might be prowling the forest primeval with a view to breakfast. In this snug if somewhat paludine retreat the Celt could fish, make love, chip out all those arrow-heads

and other somewhat apocryphal objects designed by his provident philanthropy for the decoration of modern museums, and indulge in "blind hysterics" to any extent without fear either of Druid, dun, or rate-collector. Numbers of these mardelles, like those which still exist in some islands of Polynesia, are yet to be seen in these deep forests, if you know where to look and can discern through the maze of overgrowing trees; countless others have been filled up with earth in the course of ages and are untraceable. There is a wooded plateau south of the Sûre, between Medernach and Diekirch, where you may find about a hundred of them, disposed in groups. In their subsoil lurk many strange utensils buried, and will lurk till all things are laid bare; let them lurk: we shall moralise.

Man, to-day, is a giant; Alp, ocean, isthmus, melt away before his all-taming bore and keel, as Sophocles in effect observed; air will not long hold out against him; and before him beast and savage flee and become extinct. In those old days, he was a pigmy in the presence of the dreaded forces of Nature. Behold him in his lacustrine mud-cabin amid the waters, keeping one cold blue eye on the danger-fraught forest, the other bent in affectionate solicitude upon the partner of his somewhat marshy joys, as she fashions for that tender brood, who are sitting around fishing for sticklebacks, garments modest only in the sense of exiguity. It is the dawn of the long struggle between Intellect and Brute Force; and Intellect has conquered.

Turn we from these wild and wind-swept puddles. The aboriginee has left a far less recondite and more enduring legacy, in the form of a large bundle of place-names. A stone monument perishes, a hole gets filled up; an impalpable word-sound, a breath, lives for ever. As in North America the noble redskin has left his card, so to speak, in the names of mountain, lake, and stream, so in our territory

the names of all the rivers and half the villages are Celtic. The Moselle, the Sûre, the Syre, the Alzette, the Attert, the Erenz ; the words Hart (wood), Venn (fen, marsh—Ardenne is Hart-Fenn, Marshy Forest), Brouch (morass) Bous (pasturage), Laach (lake), which enter into the composition of so many place-names, are the hall-marks of the Celt.

Now when we say the Celt, we mean, roughly speaking, the Gaul, as distinguished from the German. Celt and Teuton, though sprung from the same great Aryan stock, were strongly distinct. Both were of gigantic stature, deriding the Roman soldiers as pigmies ; but here the resemblance ceased. The Gaul's yellow hair floated over his shoulders ; the fierce German's fiery red locks were twisted into a bellicose top-knot. The one wore garments of brilliant hue, like the modern Gael his scion, covering neck and arms with chains of gold ; the other wore no ornament but the iron ring round his neck, the badge of youth, from whose reproach his first homicide relieved him. The Gaul was quick-tempered, terrible in wrath, but normally good-humoured, not good at sustained conflict ; with the German war was a science and a duty. A soldier who fought under Julian tells us that the Gallic ladies rendered valuable assistance to their husbands in the fray. When one of these women, he tells us, "her neck swollen, her teeth gnashing, began brandishing her vast and snowy arms, kicking with her heels, and planting her fisticuffs like bolts from a catapult," it was no laughing matter.

In polity there was wide difference between the two races. The Gallic tribes were aristocratic clanships. Everyone, who was neither noble nor priest, was a slave. The system was feudal ; the people offered themselves as vassals to any noble strong enough to protect them ; the noble went forth to war surrounded with his dependents, under a chief of all

the clans, elected annually. Civil and judicial power was vested supremely in the Druids. To disobey these formidable flamens was to be excommunicated from the sacrifices—that is, practically, from human society. The German government, on the other hand, was republican. Their generals, called by the Romans princes and kings, were chosen by ballot, at the great assembly of the people called at the full of the moon. These chieftains, Könige, Canning or Able Men, were raised aloft on the shoulders of the host, amid wild cries of battle and clash of spear and shield. The army consisted of volunteers: to desert the field while his chief lived was for a soldier eternal infamy. Again, while the Gaul was agricultural and pastoral, the ferocious German, Heer-man, War-man, hated a shepherd as did an Egyptian, and considered farming a disgrace to manhood. Blood, not sweat, was to him the means of acquisition. He was a warlike nomad; a temporary, lonely hut was enough for him. But the Celt built towns and villages, was gregarious. He was abominably incontinent; the German was monogamous, loyal, and chaste, his wedding-presents to his bride consisting of horse and shield and spear, as to the future partner of his bloody fortunes. The German had no half-lights; the Celt had few lights of any kind.

But it is in religion that the contrast is most deeply marked. The Gaul was a credulous, barbarously ignorant, priest-ridden slave, the chattel of his murderous Druid; the imagination shudders, says Motley,¹ “to penetrate those shaggy forests, ringing with the death-shrieks of ten thousand victims, and with the hideous hymns chanted by smoky and blood-stained priests to the savage gods they served.” The Teuton’s faith, on the other hand, was monotheistic and lofty; he believed in the sublime, invisible, unimaged All-Father, dwelling not in temples made with hands. No

¹ *Dutch Republic.*

priestly caste had he, few sacrifices until debased by intercourse of Celt and Roman ; a darkness propitious to the coming Christian light. The respective funeral customs illustrate the religious divergence. The Celt made pomp of obsequies, with suttee of wives, slaves, and beasts ; and raised vast monuments of stone, as we shall see in later pages. At the Teuton's burial only his arms and war-horse were buried with him. Tombstones and tears were forbidden. "Women lament", said they ; "men remember". If you would see the Celt, go find him in the Morbihan to-day ; or read Victor Hugo's description of the Breton peasant in "Ninety-Three". As to the German, he is fairly reproduced in the typical bellicosity and bluntness of the nation, half-martial and half-mystic, which now bears his name.

These distinctions are well known. I have sketched them because the population of the Luxembourg springs, with Roman admixture, from a fusion of the two peoples. The brave aboriginal Celts of Gallia Belgica were, according to Cæsar, supreme among the Gauls for prowess. But this was because a Teuton element had found its way into their blood. About two centuries before Christ the Germans on the right banks of the Rhine had forced their westward way across and mingled their stern qualities with the lighter Belgic material. The two races, sprung from one Aryan source, were just similar enough to blend and unlike enough to supplement one another's extremes. German lent Gaul martial stamina, Celt leavened Teuton's ferocity. It was especially in the eastern cantons of the Silva Arduenna, or Ardennes, the scene of our present inquiries, that this mixture had taken place. The immense territory called Belgica comprised some two dozen peoples, a vast military federation, bound together only by an unwritten law of common interest. If any of these tribes fathered our

Luxembourgeois, it was the powerful eastern Treveri, who dwelt in the Moselle valley, were strong from Rhine to Meuse, and gave their name to Trèves—called later by the Romans Augusta Trevirorum.

That city, just outside our principality but long and intimately related with it in history, claims a far greater antiquity. Upon an old house in its midst is still an inscription to this effect :

ANTE ROMAN TREVERIS STETIT ANNOS MILLE TRECENTIS
PERSTET ET AETERNA PACE FRUATUR AMEN

which means that Trèves stood thirteen hundred years before Rome, and aspires that it may peacefully stand for ever. If it has stood all that time it will probably stand some time longer. The story is that Trebeta, stepson of Semiramis queen of Assyria, when fleeing from his step-mother, came and built the town of Trèves. We will leave this to the historical critic. Certain it is that the Treveri, with the tribes that surrounded them—the Ubii of Cologne, the Eburones of Liège, the Condrusi of Condroz, the Aduatici of Namur—were all of Germano-Celtic origin. That is how St. Jerome, who stayed at Trèves about 420 A.D., noticed a likeness in the language to that of the Galatians, a Gaulish colony of Asia Minor. Tacitus, too, says that the Treveri and Nervii were most particular about their German origin, disclaiming all connexion with the lazy Gauls ; which nervous affectation of course proclaimed the said Gauls their relatives : and Cæsar, seeing through them with ethnologic eye, sets them down as simply Gauls in a German skin. The modern name Walloon, as applied to the southern Belgians, is identical with “Welsh”, “Gallic”, “Gælic”, and points to a Celtic base at least. This happy mixture of two extremes furnishes the prototype of that romantic bravery and chivalric lightness of heart, which

flows like a warm stream through the mediæval history of the illustrious County of Luxembourg.

Part of the present Duchy belonged to the Eburones. In the much later times of ecclesiastical jurisdiction, the principality fell between two sees. There is a distinct natural line of demarcation running across it, a ridge of highest tableland, parting the rivers Alzette and Sûre. This watershed is traceable in a row of place-names lying all along it, and all meaning "partition": Bour(g)scheid, Nachtmanderscheid, Schlindermenderscheid, Heiderscheid, Rindschleider, Folschette or Volkscheid—separation of castles, men, heaths, flocks, peoples. Following the same line are villages, Wallendorf, Walsdorf, Wahlhausen, Welsdorf, Welscheid, Wahl; all pointing to *Gallic* boundaries. North of this line, then, extended the diocese of Liège; south of it, the province of Trèves. Now it is a remarkable fact that this was anciently the exact line of division between the Treveri and the Eburones. It had become the diocesan boundary after Christianity had been established as a State religion by Constantine; when the Church took over the administrative and ethnological arrangements of the Roman Empire, in common with many of its devotional objects and methods.

History, for this region, begins with Julius Cæsar. The Treveri, in whom we are interested, played a vital part in his conquests. If the Batavians formed one leg of the scissors with which that clever general cut out the Western Roman Empire, his own magnificent strategic reputation, and Pompey,—our Treveri contributed the other. The Luxembourg-to-be was the pivot of all Belgium's subjugation. Among the Treveri, prime objects of his subtle diplomacy, the conqueror found his best friends and bitterest enemies. They developed a Unionist party and a Home Rule party. His money and manners won the hearts of the former; they supplied him with

geographical information for his first map. At the very outset we find their legates in the camp of Bibracte craving his help against the inroads of the savage Suevi ; in the battle of the Sambre they are fighting at his side. Serving with his legions, they formed the wedge by which he broke the Nervian coalition. But this made the national party the more hostile. The valiant Trevirian Indutiomar, Cæsar's implacable enemy, is no less the undying foe of schoolboys ; as also the intrepid Cingetorix, his friend and ally, and the doughty Ambiorix, anti-Roman general of the Eburones. It was among the trackless forests of the Luxembourg that the chieftains called the great council of war which proposed to snatch all Belgium out of Cæsar's hand. But the snatching was destined to be on the other side. For in the beauteous valleys of Meuse and Ourthe, rivers of the Ardennes, the redoubtable Commentator (according to his own account) commented upon their conciliar decisions by wiping the whole confederation off the face of the earth. The "river" in which Indutiomar perished was probably the Sûre or the Our.

After this final lesson the refractory Trevirians came to the conclusion that Cæsar was in every sense a taking commander. Astute politician as he was, he set himself, having completely mastered Belgium, to stanch the wounds he had made. He declared the Trevirians a free people. Touched by the compliment they ranged themselves with devoted loyalty under the Roman standard, rendered Cæsar splendid service in his invasion of Rome, and bore valiant part at Pharsalia and Thapsus against the conceited Pompey. For reward they received *en masse* the privilege of Roman citizenship, and in some cases of senatorial rank itself. Those were palmy days for the dwellers in the parts of Belgica about Trèves. It was Claudius who raised the city to the rank of a Roman Colony. Under the first emperors

we find numbers of the Treveri in the Prætorian Guard, causing quite a flutter among Roman nursemaids by their gigantic stature, blue eyes, flaxen hair, and other angelic characteristics.

Had it not been for Cæsar's irritating habit of omitting the names of the spots where his legions camped and his victories took place, we should have been able to map out his movements as we can map out Waterloo. No doubt he was sufficiently hard put to it in dressing up the names of the tribes with Latin terminations ; the results of which investiture, as he had only his ear to guide him, are probably in many cases as near to the originals as is Audrey to Etheldreda. He tells us that the forest Arduenna, by him mentioned for the first time in history, reached from the Rhine's banks and the borders of the Treveri to those of the Nervii, being more than five hundred miles (*millibus*) in length, the greatest of all Gaul. His remarks as touching the savagery of these peoples must be accepted with certain saline grains, in consideration of the well-known Roman inability to do justice to "barbarians"—a name bestowed by them in pity upon all races which did not see the point of having their homes commandeered and their lands annexed in the airy way which the Romans considered their own heaven-sent prerogative.

The Treveri at any rate showed themselves possessed of a military organisation capable of putting the conqueror to much trouble and expense, as also, afterwards, of a loyalty which helped to raise him to his ultimate pedestal. He does throw them a gingerly compliment on their cavalry ; their "valour among the Gauls" is "in unique estimation", for Gauls ; they are far the best cavalry—of Gaul. Strabo and Varro speak of their fine fat pigs with an epicure's enthusiasm ; they supplied Rome and all Italy with salt pork ; Ardennes was called the kitchen of Italy. The

justly-famed "Ardennes ham" of to-day is of ancient and honourable lineage. That the Romans taught the Treveri the art of corn-growing seems to be testified by the prevalence in the country to this day of many Latin-born agricultural words, such as *iëren* from *arare*, *kolter* from *culter*. The mass of the people, according to Cæsar, were poor-spirited enough. Tyrannised over by their military chiefs and Druid-ridden to such a degree that they could call neither minds nor heads their own, they accepted Roman rule in the light merely of a change of masters; a change for the better; from Druidism, what change could be otherwise?

But the patronage of the comparatively reasonable and humane Cæsar could not last for ever. The Ides of March came. All was confusion. Emerging at length, the Trevirian territory finds itself under the iron heel of Augustus, its independence gone, reduced to a sort of advance-guard upon the troublesome Rhineland, a strategic outpost bristling with fortifications, a mere training-ground for the military idea. Witness the existing camps of Dalheim, Helperknap, Altrier, Nommerley, Remich. It was not to be expected that these children of nature, with the Teuton blood in their veins, would tamely submit to have their grand old fatherland of crag and fen and forest labelled off as "Belgica Prima" or "Secunda Germanica," like a porter or policeman, who is known only by a number. We need not marvel, then, to find Julius Florus, Classicus, Julius Tutor, and other native high-souls, scheming desperate attacks upon the regiments stationed in their country by Tiberius and Vespasian; still less is it matter for wonder that the immense machinery with which they would tamper ground them promptly to powder. Then came that great Batavian revolt under the ambitious Claudius Civilis, inspired by the Bructerian witch from her lofty forest-tower, which went near to cut Gaul and Lower Germany adrift and

place the Dutch adventurer on the throne of the Cæsars ; the vivid pen of Tacitus has told us how this hot enterprise, in which all Belgic Gaul took part, was suffocated in blood.

But better times were coming. As the Roman dominion made itself felt in the Gauls, the refinements of their civilisation, not yet hopelessly corrupt, could not but tend to peace and well-being. Things must be better before they were worse. Under the Antonines, from Nerva to Marcus Aurelius, the empire—or the world, which was practically the same thing—enjoyed a sort of golden prosperity and quietude ; in which our Ardenne bore a notable part. For was not old Trèves, the Fontainebleau of the Emperors, fast becoming the Transalpine capital of the Empire, and, after Lyon, the first city of Gaul ? Its mighty Porta Nigra, its Baths, its Amphitheatre, its Palace of Constantine, the great and varied wealth of its museum, attest the perished greatness of this little Babylon. Its substructions, of wide circumference, argue a population of at least a hundred thousand ; this in turn connotes, for a radius of leagues and leagues around the city, a dense occupation and an advanced agriculture. Near by, on the Moselle, stands the tall Column of Igel, monarch of Roman monuments on this side the Alps. The people call it Heathen Tower ; it is a sculptured allegorical tombstone of the great Secundini, a county family who had made a vast fortune in business ; their monuments pervade the whole region. These things bespeak, from the second to the fourth century, a large and populous area of civilisation. Upon the dark reverse of the picture we need not dwell. It had its Nemesis.

The Romans, after their manner, criss-crossed Gaul with military roads, stretching between the most important strategic points. Here is a perfect grill of them ; they run to and from Rheims, Arlon, Trèves, Cologne, Namur, Metz. The largest led from Rheims to Trèves, through the site

of the town of Luxembourg. The people call them Kiem, an old Gaulish word, from which *chemin* is derived; Kehmen is a village on a Kiem; "the Kémchen" is a slice of such a road. At different points along the roads they would place an encampment, with half a legion (3,000 men) in case of German incursion or popular rising. There is scarce a square mile unfruitful in cairn, camp, altar, coin, or utensil. A pyramidal tumulus at Spittelhof, called Thom (tumba), measures thirty yards a side and seventeen high.

In the tumuli are the usual urns, ornaments, money, and tear-phials. One of these latter had been sealed with a blow-pipe; an analyst opened it, found human tears—which are eternal! Rome's sculptured stones are used by the uncultivated cultivator as door-jambs and swine-troughs. Coins from the first Cæsars to the fall of the Western Empire never come to an end. Eighty-nine emperors, empresses, and Cæsars, from Augustus to Arcadius, have left their image and superscription. All metals are in evidence; gold and silver trinkets, stirrups, horse-shoes, bits, bridles. Dalheim is quite a Pompeii; the sudden lava-tide of Huns, an eternal shroud, preserved as much as it destroyed. The first find there was twenty-four thousand of Constantine's coppers; it must have been a savings-bank.

The favourite local altar is cubical, with deities in relief on the four faces; one quartet is Minerva, Mercury, Diana and Hercules; another Vesta, Mercury, Terpsichore and Hercules; another Minerva, Apollo, Juno and Hercules. The popular gods are Hercules (specially revered in the eastern Ardenne as name-saint and patron of the emperor Maximinianus Herculeus, who took his holidays at Trèves); the protective Minerva; the household Mercury; and Diana the Huntress. The Romans found the climate cold. They have left, in magnificent mosaics, the traces

of their passion for hot baths. Unhappily the modern authorities will seldom leave a thing where they found it. They will carry it away to a museum, be it as big as a house. If it be not in their opinion worth that trouble they will destroy it. The pains that have been taken to make Trèves look like a modern town are worthy of a less detestable cause. But Trèves of course is in Germany. They have not packed away Constantine's Basilica in the museum, because it is a hundred feet high and two hundred and twenty long. If they were really an enterprising people they could manage by taking it to pieces and removing several tons of broken and unclassified Roman pottery to make room for it. German municipal authorities are ashamed of antiquity, and only extend a qualified toleration to quaintness, which they never originate except quite by mistake.

Ausonius, tutor to the Emperor Gratian, wrote late in the fourth century a charming poem called "Mosella". In it he celebrates the beautiful villas along the banks of his favourite river, and the delicacies provided by Ardenne for the epicure. He describes the country as the Empire's kitchen, wardrobe, and arsenal :

"Imperii vires quod alit, quod vestit et armat."

Certainly on all counts the Roman province of Luxembourg, during the golden age of the Empire, had a far larger population than it has to-day, and was probably a good deal more prosperous. The people were mere serfs, under German or Roman masters. But they have never been otherwise, and are so to-day. A rich and well-born minority lifts head above life's cares. But the vast bulk toils in the fields for daily bread. The pathetic bovine mildness of labour sits in every eye ; the only relaxation is religion. It was much the same when the Cæsar was Grand Duke, and Diana kept

her niche warm for St. Hubert. Sweat has been the order of the centuries in the Ardennes, and its folk have counted themselves lucky when it has not been crimson. Roses are the flowers of Luxembourg, blooming brightly everywhere ; they say it is because blood is good for roses. Time has stanchd the blood, but the more peaceful ichor, part of the eternal destiny of Adam's race, flows still. Here, during the first centuries, the patient peasantry laboured to supply a daily-degenerating Roman aristocracy with luxuries—the narcotics which were to prepare it for the sword of an Attila and the scramasaxe of an Alaric. It was neither Goth, Visigoth, Hun, nor Frank, that killed the Eagle ; it was the good things of the Gauls.

The dyspeptic symptoms began at the extremities. Under the feeble sway of Gallienus (263–268) our corner of Belgica had a heptade of horror. Almost every legion stationed in the Gauls revolted, and greeted its colonel with *Ave Imperator* ! Western Europe suddenly bristled with Cæsars ; they were as common as bilberries. The period has been called the Epoch of the Thirty Tyrants. In the confusion all the cut-throat hordes turned upon our unhappy little region and devoured it with sword and flame from end to end. A savage pirate rejoicing in the prickly name of Chrokus, at head of a gang of murderous Suevi, Franks, Alemanni, let himself loose upon the smiling valleys of Moselle and Sûre, and those rivers soon ran red. This little reign of terror is practically passed over by history ; but they know all about it in the Duchy because the people hid their money and were picked off by Chrokus and Company before they could dig it up again ; which money of the period has been unearthed in quantities at more than a dozen points. The Suevi, too, have left their impress in the place-names, Schweich, Schwalbach, Schweb-singen, and in many a patois-idiom to be heard also in

the south of Germany. This affair, however, to the wise a sign, was but passing. For the century closed in peace ; and the next found Emperors quietly enjoying their *villeggiatura* at Trèves—Constantius, Maximian, Constantine. We hear of this last having several thousand Frankish prisoners butchered in the amphitheatre to entertain his mother, the pious St. Helena.

Another century, and the pendulum has swung the other way at Trèves ; Vandal and Frank are pouring into the city and sacking it again and again ; which murderous tide it has never since recovered. These are the widening cracks in the sides of the dome of empire ; soon the collapse must come. Old Rome, at the beginning of the fifth century, was in the last stage of her decline ; in 419 Honorius found it convenient to divide the Western Empire with the Franks ; the younger generation was knocking at the Master-BUILDER'S door. In 451 that sanguinary besom, the Huns, swept over these forests and vales. Aëtius, in the plains of Châlons, drove them back ; but, like a scimitar drawn from a wound, they wrought yet greater mischief in their retreat. Roman Luxembourg, a true palimpsest of many scripts, is Hun-blotted all over ; Hunsrück, Hunsdorf, Huncheringen, Holler (once Hunlar), these and other place-names mark the naked trail of these six hundred thousand Mongolian caterpillars ; two villages called Schieren monumentalise the Scirri, who accompanied Attila, the Scourge of God ; and Ettelbrück, not far off, is "Attila's Bridge." So the great march of "Germany" to universal empire, which her prophets and bards had foretold, goes majestically forward. The fountains of the frozen North are opened, and the inexhaustible Teutonic stream, another deluge, overrides the world. At length, in 476, the tottering giant of the West fell down, and twenty years later our territory formally and definitely became part of a new empire—the Frankish.

During the childhood of the Christian era social conditions must have offered a striking contrast to purling streams and sunlit forests in this fair ingle of Arduenna. We have to picture, jostling one another, three races, neither of them quite sure which of the two others it detested most, and each at continual loggerheads within itself—German, Gaul, and Roman ; a scalene triangle of greed, hatred and fear ; while over all an advanced culture spread its vicious, glozing veil. Worse : three religions, each positively the one and only way of eternal life, and quite certain of everything in this world and the next, except which of its rivals would incur the hotter hell : Druidism, dark, mysterious, unscrupulous, recondite, gory ; Paganism, gaily bestial amid its crop of gods, a filthy *Salle des Miroirs* where men gloated on the images of their own lost souls ; and poor, nascent, shrinking Christianity, more fruitful in martyrdom than history knows, and as ready as the rest, when the worst came to the worst, to confer that crown upon its rivals ; the little heir-elect of the world, its minority guarded by a pair of wicked uncles. Frowning with sensuous leer over all was Trèves, the Rome of the Occident, where the cramped and surfeited Italian, tired of the hot East, had come to stretch his bloated limbs amid fresh scenes of cooler beauty, levy new sensations upon fair Teuton girls and Gallic gore. Picture all this, draw it out to the time of the sudden barbarian sickle thrust into the over-ripe harvest of the earth, and fancy can fill up history's lacking measures with many a romance of love, murder, and avarice. Here is material for situations ! Nobody made copy of it all. Nobody wrote but Romans ; and they, living "in *Confinio Barbarorum*," did not concern themselves with the doings of savages ; or, if they did, the blood-deluge of the fifth century has swept their records into oblivion. But the stones speak ; and here, pieced

together without much difficulty, is one story they tell. It lacks *dénouement*; but its suggestiveness lies just there.

A young Oriental, whom his imperial master had favoured with the principedom of a veritable kingdom in Transalpine Gaul, came and took up his official residence at Trèves. He proceeded to build, in the fair plain of Remich, on the banks of the Moselle—though Ausonius had yet to sing it, nor had Probus planted the vine on its sunny slopes—a palace more sumptuous than our dowdy modernity can dream. A large cordon of skilful slaves fashioned and polished, with exquisite art, the blocks of Vosges granite and Audun sandstone which had been laid under contribution for cornice and entablature, pillar, capital, and architrave. Voluptuous frescoes, adorning the walls of the bathing-hall, drew from the stores of myth and story every honeyed immodesty that could titillate the effete senses of a darling of the Gods; the well-groomed shapely foot flushed charmingly as Hebe's in Heaven against the many-hued floor's tessellated glories; the ceilings gleamed and gloomed with cedar and thyine wood and gold. In this retreat our languid knight tasted every earthly pleasure and probably a few which we should deem flattered even by that epithet. The whole country lay at his feet and offered, as in sacrifice, all its best of fish, flesh, fowl and female. At his name every head was bowed, and he said in his pride, "I shall never be moved, and my house will continue for ever." But he reckoned without the Suevi.

He had one fair daughter, of flawless beauty. She was engaged to the son of the prætorian Prefect at Trèves. But she scorned this young man; an offensive lady-killer, an "oiled and curled Assyrian Bull" who when he was not playing the lute and the fool in the women's apartments, spent his time before the mirror, paring his filbert nails, tinting his eyebrows, and anointing his raven locks with

scented unguents. Perhaps he was one of the second-rate Secundine family. He pestered the beauty with his delicate attentions, but she was not taking them. She was an Eastern girl, doating on the sun, upon masculine strength, upon deeds of valour. Her heart was set upon a blond, stalwart son of northern Gaul, a half-naked giant, captain of the Gendarmes who stalked up and down at the gates of the proconsular palace. He was a Christian. They loved, these two—and while her sire was discussing his semi-dead mullet and choice Falernian, would meet in secret, and exchange those vows to which the leaves have listened since spring first smiled upon the earth.

The Gendarme's father was an old, white-bearded Druid, who lived among the bosky recesses of a sacred wood. His pet aversion, in common with many a modern clergyman, was Rome with all its works. He had his truculent old notions of morality, too—where other people were concerned; and did not hold with the doings at the *maison* Remich. He adhered to his grove and took duty every day; but while he wielded the sanguinary knife and mumbled the devilish-sounding incantations which bounded his idea of worship, he was all the time maintaining secret communications with the enemy the other side of the Rhine. His occult arts had kept him informed of his son's *liaison*, and he was inwardly resolved to put a stop to it. And while the grim old priest incanted and plotted, and the proconsul debauched, the young people drank their fill of love.

This is how the story cuts itself short. Down from the mountains of the Black Forest poured the bloodthirsty Swabians, with their deerskin-covered shoulders, and their long manes flying in the night-wind. It was a put-up thing with the ancient Oak-dweller. The human avalanche scattered death and hell in its wake. The Proconsul was hacked in pieces, his fine palace was made dust, his harem was

carried off, his very name was blotted out of the human record. That is why I cannot tell it you. He was wrong, you see, in supposing himself any way durable.

And meanwhile, where were the maid and her brawny Scandinavian? Flown—flown to the snows of his northern clime, where she finds a thatched cabin more palatial than her father's palace, because Love is there; Love, that survives kingdoms, and stands on their ruins smiling. The wild-wood strikes its roots into the once-splendid pleasures, and covers the shorn site of the palace with its shade. Fifteen centuries later, a tardy resurrection adds its mockery to the nameless prince's downfall, in the shape of the magnificent mosaic of *Nennig*.

The story wants for roundness. But it may serve as an everyday type of a time, when an empire was come to the travail-pangs of which it was doomed to die; one of those punctuation-periods in the world's day, which are fraught with so great import for the reading of history's pages; perhaps the most signal of all such periods; certainly, for us moderns, the darkest, the most complex, and the least understood.

It is not to our purpose to track those awful human tides, which mysterious convulsions in the corners of the earth rolled up to break in ever-fiercer series against a tottering throne; those hordes of savages pushed out from their own homes by the time's mysterious laws, to ravin at the giant's gates, to be dashed back again and again, to return in ever-increasing swarms. Babylon is fallen. Let the fetid smoke clear away, the bloody page be turned.

The fifth century closes upon changed scenes. The young-blooded, pushful Frank has flung off the giant's slack and sottish clutch from Gaul. The immense Empire is broken in pieces; our Arden-corner, ever a lively ball in the long game of rapacity, falls with the lion-share to a

people destined to found a most lively kingdom upon its ruins. Nay, not "a people". The Franks were a confederacy of Teutonic peoples ; some dominant, some vassal. As they were the part-ancestors of one of the greatest and most enlightened nations of Europe, history and geography have naturally been ransacked in the effort to find out their origin. The ransacking will probably go on for some time. Meanwhile the reader may in part slake his thirst for knowledge with the working assumption that they originated among the Catti, Chauci, Cherusci in the present region of Westphalia, Hesse, and Brunswick ; that they were undoubtedly a great association of kindred Germanic tribes, bound together by interests of mutual advantage ; and that their common principle, freedom from that yoke to which other tribes had bowed, was expressed in the name Frank—Low-Latin *Francus*, free. Ancient glossaries, however, render the word fierce, insolent, or cruel ; which may be right, as the old Luxembourg words *frech* and *fraak* have still this meaning. Their ancient law was, "Conquer or die". A truculent, treacherous race they were, hardy swimmers in their native waters, navigators of the North Sea. Propertius says,

*"Germania tota feratur
Navibus et socia comitantur classe Sicambri ;"*

and Sidonius Apollinaris,

"Cursu Herulus, jaculis Hunnus, Francusque natatu."

Already in the third century they had sown destruction from Rhine to Pyrenees ; and crossing those mountains they had raged and ransacked in Spain for years, and had even seized on vessels in Spanish ports and sailed into Africa. Later we find them holding important offices under the younger Constantine, and by keeping eyes and ears open, biding their time, and learning all they could in

the way of civilisation, paving the way for their own ultimate ascendancy.

In 360 some provinces across the Rhine rebelled, and Constantius sent a swarm of Franks and Alemanni to subdue them. The conduct of these sheep-dogs on that occasion is typic of their character. They did their work more than conscientiously. They pillaged and reduced to ashes forty-five flourishing cities, among which were Cologne, Trèves, Worms, Spires, Strasburg; built dens and lairs for themselves, like wild beasts, on the banks of Rhine, Moselle, and Meuse, cutting down long trees and throwing them across the roads to guard against surprise; and set up, in the region called Toxandria (Brabant), a nucleus of their future empire. But the pedantic Julian, who had more in him than rumour gives him credit for, braced himself up, shut his Plato, and marching across the Rhine with a handful of men reduced both these savage tribes to a submission which preserved Gaul to the Empire for another hundred years. He then proceeded to compose his own "Commentaries of the Gallic War", to break Cæsar's record. The latter, he said, had boasted that he had twice crossed the Rhine; Julian had beaten him—he had done it thrice. Unhappily or happily for modern schoolboys, they are debarred from the study of this performance of Julian's, because it has not come down to us. It would probably have proved richer reading than the earlier work, which is somewhat plain fare for the youthful mind. "The Commentaries of Julian Cæsar" has a distinctly racy sound.

But the Frankish colony in Brabant grew little by little along the banks of Meuse and Scheldt, until it filled with its power the whole of Lower Germany, including our territory. This latter they eventually incorporated into the Province of "Austrasia". The present Duchy formed part

of four Pagi or "*Gauer*", governed by counts under the Merovingian dynasty. These princes, whom they raised aloft on a shield at their accession, reigned contemporaneously over their different tribes, and often quarrelled outrageously. They wore long flowing ringlets, while the rest of the nation were obliged to shave the back of the head, to comb the hair over the forehead, and to confine themselves, by way of "ornament", to a small pair of whiskers. There is no accounting for tastes. The men were trained from boyhood to every form of athletics; with javelin or battle-axe they were deadly; they ran like hares, jumped like gazelles, swam amphibiously; and their reputation for invincibility was dearer to them than life.

The record of this people, until the close of the fifth century, is dim and discursive. Up to that time they were more like a firework display than a people. They appear and disappear on the historic horizon confusingly; the only unifying condition being a general and most sacred sense of mission; the mission being the demolition of the universe. The first head upon which history steadily focusses its light is that of the great Clovis. He was lord of the small Salian tribe in Batavia, and slashed and plundered all round him to such an extent that the other Frankish tribes, who lived along the Belgic rivers, were smitten with admiration, and flocked to the standard of so virtuous a prince. He began quite in a small way, with a mere matter of five thousand men; but by aid of his own laudable energies and the locust-like proclivities of his daily-increasing hordes, he rapidly gained entire possession of Gaul. St. Gregory of Tours celebrates the "justice" of this pirate. Every depredation was followed, we are told, with a fair division of the plunder; and the slightest insubordination brought death without benefit of clergy. Under him the Franks first learned military discipline. The pious Clovis was a born diploma-

tist. He was a sanguinary Teuton, a cultured Roman, and a Christian saint, according to circumstances. He was great.

After clearing Gaul of the Burgundians and other Germans who still barred his progress, and wiping out the Alemanni—those chronic foes whom Rome had found invincible—Clovis listened to the prayers of his Christian wife Clotilde, and was baptized in Rheims Cathedral by St. Remigius with three thousand of his devoted Franks, who would probably have heard of it again had they made any trouble about the matter. He does not seem, however, to have grown any nicer or kinder on this account. St. Gregory of Tours, his biographer and panegyrist, who was somewhat modestly endowed with the sense of humour, tells us gravely that on one occasion, after dismissing with prayer a synod of the Gallican Church, he quietly proceeded to butcher all the Merovingian princes. Having pushed his arms into France, he fixed on Paris as his royal seat ; conquered the Goths under Alaric, his only remaining rivals ; and was invested with purple tunic in St. Martin's Church at Tours. Twenty-five years after his death, the Emperor Justinian generously bestowed on his sons the provinces of Gaul, which they already possessed ; and most gracefully absolved its inhabitants from their allegiance to himself, which had only existed in his own august imagination. Thus the French kingdom of the Merovingians, in the generation succeeding Clovis, already included all Gaul from western France to the Rhine, and their suzerainty reached to the Alps and beyond them.

The Franks do not appear to have impressed themselves very largely upon the Moselle quarter. They found decaying Latin, Rome's legacy, current all over Gaul, except in this region ; and, in obedience to the law by which a conquered majority absorbs a conquering minority, they

themselves in time forgot their German and slipped into the "lingua Franca" to which the canine Latin, throughout their empire, was giving birth. So, by the ninth century, the great French language, laziest, sweetest, and most degenerate of the children of Cicero's organ-music, was in the hobbledehoy stage everywhere, not knowing in the least what to do with its consonants, but fast growing up to adult estate. Yet in the tracts of the Treveri the old Germanic idiom still lived on, as it lives to-day. There is extant a deed of gift to the abbey of Prum, dating about 800, containing a sort of census of villages in the neighbourhood. The names of the inhabitants are of this kind : Damaldus, Adelgardus, Renghardus, Dombefredus, Richarius, Aganulfus, Adelbertus, and so forth. Cut off the Latin terminations, which are simply clerical work, and the names are all pure Teutonic ; borne by descendants of the old Trevirian stock enslaved by their Frankish conquerors. Nor have these latter left many tangible traces. Celt and Roman cry from the ground ; their successors in imperial fortune sat more lightly. They hated walls, they lived for war, they loved the open country, they had no poets, they were ever on the move. They meddled little with the villas on the banks of the Moselle ; Venantius Fortunatus, going by water about 566 from Metz to Andernach, passed, he says, "between the smoking chimneys of houses"; and yet these villas all belonged to men who belonged, body and soul, to a Merovingian overlord. It may have been an oversight. Neither are more than a very few Merovingian coins found here. The Franks used the currency of the Roman Low-Empire, and their own attempts at imitation were crude and limited ; possibly most of their commerce was carried on in kind.

But they have left their tombs. Being at least in name a Christian folk, they were careful about burial. They

never burned their dead, but buried them in paved and walled vaults, sometimes with, sometimes without coffins of wood or stone ; the coffins were arranged in rows north and south, so that the feet all pointed east. With this Christian custom they united the notion that the next life was a sort of rose-coloured version of this, with the same slaughtering and hunting and love-making on a loftier scale. It is as civilised a conception as the eternal musical lounge which forms the goal of many religious hopes to-day. So they put in with the beloved dead the things they thought would prove most handy to him ; wherefore in the Frankish coffins of the Luxembourg, which are of enormous size, are found knives, arrows, franciscas, scramasaxes, shield-bosses, drinking-glasses, and belt-ornaments ; also flint and steel for fire—a superfluous provision, one might have thought, for a dead Merovingian.

The floating Merovingian tendency to divide the Empire into two great regions—Austrasia or Austria, Eastern Teutonic Land, the nucleus of Germany, and Neustria, Western Romance Land, the nucleus of France—became crystallised under the Carolingians. After endless divisions and reunions among the Merovingian *fainéants*, the whole Frankish dominion again, in the second half of the eighth century, was joined under these Austrasian and purely German Karlings, whose “Mayors of the Palace,” kept at Soissons to support their interests, became eventually rulers supreme, who consolidated and extended their empire in every direction. Of these great and enlightened princes the Pagus Mosellanus was a very nest ; Pepin of Heristal himself was a native of this region ; and it profited thereby. Luxurious palaces sprang up ; the Pepins loved their country-seats at Biedbourg and Longlier ; Charlemagne, his strategic eye turned Rhinewards, made long stays in his hunting-box at Besling, in whose church, they

say, he buried his paladin, Ogier the Dane ; and in his great castle at Thionville, where he held his Frankish Parliament, the Champ de Mai ; it was here that he read his last Will to the fiefs of his empire. Good had it been for Austrasia if that empire had endured.

The Frankish conquest of Gaul was attended with no persecution of Christians, for the character of this people was never anti-Christian. It offered a more favourable field for the Gospel-seed than did the Roman. The Northern genius was more receptive of Christianity than was the Southern. When the Franks took the reins of empire, the Faith had made great strides in the Gauls, and especially in the neighbourhood of Trèves. The last of the Four General Councils was already a thing of nearly half-a-century ago. The Diocletian persecution had not affected this part of Gaul, which had then been under charge of Constantius Chlorus, the husband of St. Helena. Their son, Constantine, had lived long and often at Trèves, and all Christians dwelt under the mantle of his protection. St. Eucherius, first Bishop of the venerable see of Trèves, is said to have been appointed by St. Peter, who sent him his staff as a symbol of office. His successors St. Agritius, St. Maximin, and St. Paulinus, had all held rousing missions in our little country. There is every reason to believe that the Franks found the Faith of the Cross dominant in the land. The Stone cut out without hands had broken the iron-clay feet of the image of heathenesse. With the Carolingian dynasty the religious life began to develop in Austrasia. The epochs of Kings Sigbert and Dagobert I. and II., and the influence of that truly-great Mayor of the Palace, Pepin of Heristal, were creative in this regard. The Church flourished, for there was nothing left to oppose her. Naturally paganism in the villages, even Druidism in the woods, died hard—if it may ever be

said to have died at all. Thus from the sixth to the seventh century we find St. Nicetius and St. Magnerius still working away at the evangelisation of the country ; and our own countryman St. Willibrord, the great apostle of the Frisians, finding it a still plenteous harvest.

The religious capital was Echternach. We shall visit this town later, shall see religion dawning there like flush of morning ; Irmine, Dagobert the Second's daughter, making the place over as a cradle to Willibrord, the Saint's Benedictine baby coming lustily to the birth, Mayor Pepin and Lady Plectrude its nursing-father and nursing-mother : it was destined to long and lively splendour, this Abbey-baby of Echternach, dandled on the knees of kings. For eleven centuries this monastery watched over the woods and vales, upheld the faith, taught good manners and agricultural industry—two arts perfectly consonant, and notably coincident in the present folk. Many know-alls at this day know all about the selfishness and self-indulgence of monks ; their "cowardly flight from temptation," and the rest. Mr. Ruskin's pedant crudities in *Etbics of the Dust* may be taken as apostolically exponent of this lofty school. We cannot too often remind ourselves that but for the great Orders Christianity would, humanly speaking, have been stamped or withered out long since, the vaunted "open Bible" lost for lack of scribes, and the name of Christ forgotten. More : continents would have remained Christless ; for it was everywhere the missionary son of Dominic, Benedict, or Francis, who carried that Light in one hand and his own life in the other. "Abuses" through invading worldliness, fully granted, are irrelevant ; would you scorn good wine, because, long open, it grows sour ? Willibrord's Abbey was for more than a millennium the religious heart of a large environment, pumping out patient labour, contented charity, and humble prayer. His nearly contemporary St. Hubert,

with his successors in the abbatial centre called by his name, did the same work for northern Ardenne. That abbey, too, was founded by the same good Plectrude, and there Hubert also rests until the End. At Trèves was the Abbey of St. Maximin ; at Orval, nearly four hundred years later, appeared another Benedictine cloister. Between the four you have a quiet, laborious folk, a good deal purer than our enlightened selves, and I think somewhat happier. Notice Plectrude in passing. The land in great measure owes its piety to a woman. There is a wonderful motive power in women, when they have once grasped the great difficult secret of impersonality. Before the scene have stood prophets, priests, and kings, and the gallery has thrown them wreaths of immortal laurel, which they have seldom been slow to set upon their brows ; but how often have they not been just marionnettes, with a good woman, unseen, pulling the wire ?

Nearly a century after the Anglo-Saxon St. Willibrord a thing happened which gives us English another interest in the land. The Most Christian Emperor Charlemagne, finding the Saxons of North Germany extremely insubordinate and doggedly pagan, and stubbornly determined not to be converted by the gentle stimulus of hanging (the very least of their offences was the pointed eating of meat in Lent), proceeded to massacre four-and-a-half thousand of them by way of a "Christian evidence." The survivors remaining obstinately unconvinced, he naturally began to lose patience, and marched them off, to the number of ten thousand, into the thinly-peopled Austrasia ; trusting that a change of air, together with the good influences to which they would be subject in so devout a region, would bring them to a better mind. It was a new kind of diocesan mission, inverted. This Assyrian deportation-policy on the part of the zealous potentate has left an indelible mark on the Luxembourg,

always the softest of tablets for faithful record of impressions. Place-names recall it : Sassenheim, Sassel, Sasselbach (Saxon-brook) near Diekirch, and, not far from the latter, Folkending (Volkthing, People's Parliament). A popular saying at Diekirch is, "They are English at Gilsdorf." Also we find the Wiltzes, a Pomeranian tribe who came with the Saxons, recorded in Wiltz, Wilwerwiltz, Wilwerding, as (probably) in our own Wiltshire. Certain Luxembourgish travellers have been astonished to find their own patois, customs, and likeness generally in several villages of Transylvania. Thus this people is in part a Saxon colony. By the same count, their dialect has many strong resemblances to the English language. They are our cousins. Removed, it is true ; but the good old blood, of which we are justly proud, runs in their veins too.

As though to instil another drop of kinship, the next moving incident was a Norman visit. These naval assassins, nearly two hundred years before they favoured our island, embarking on their long dragon-prowed deckless vessels—which drew so little water that they could sail a long way up shallow rivers—came creeping up the Rhine ; and, getting into the Moselle at Coblenz, they sacked Prüm Abbey, and filled Trèves with fire and slaughter. They then took to the river again and sailed for Metz. But Walo, Bishop of Metz, and Bertulfus, Metropolitan of Trèves, were militant churchmen, and this was not to be borne. So Bertulf sent word to Walo, and they exchanged their mitres for casques and their pastoral staves for swords, and held up the invaders at the plains of Remich. Prelate against pirate, however, is poor odds. The episcopal force was demolished, and poor Walo was killed ; and the hardy Norsemen proved their proverbial bravery and truth by doing to Remich as they had done to Trèves. They then deemed it prudent to retire. But they had spent several

springtide months in the country, the Austrasian women were fair and kind, and they were not the men, nor in the mood, to go away without kindling their fierce image in those romantic dales.

Our Luxembourg has not taken on much individuality yet, say you? Wait. It is being rough-hewn. In 723, Charles Martel, the great Mayor who hammered the Saracens back from the banks of the Loire, was taken ill at Trèves. They laid him on St. Maximin's tomb, which cured him; "and," says Bertholet, "what is after all the great thing, converted him from a not-too-respectable way of life to a better." In his gratitude to the Saint he made over to the Convent four districts which he possessed in Austrasia. One of these was called Wismaris Ecclesia, or Weimerskirch. Within its bounds, upon a gaunt, isolated rock, stood a little old fort in ruins. Tradition said it was built by the Emperor Gallienus, at the end of the third century. It bore, in Frankish jargon, the name of LUCILINBURHVT, or LÆTILINGONOBURGUM, which meant "a little outpost." We shall here, to let this name shake down, make a slight digression.

This Charles Martel's grandson was Charlemagne, one of history's stars of the first magnitude, who, like Alexander, rose an age too soon. He forced the discordant elements of Europe together in one mighty hand; the union was artificial, and they fell apart when the hand grew cold. Pagan empires had ploughed the world's soil hard and long; it must lie fallow awhile yet. His empire was a personal work and had no roots. So, when he departed, the land enjoyed her Sabbaths; and miserably dull and barren they proved. The Carlovingian stock had been drained. You cannot go on raising Pepins and Charleses for ever out of one tree. Under his do-nothing successors, a pitiable, small-souled, short-lived set, blind slaves of the Papal See

and lacking even in the wit to resign their responsibilities, the great house he had built soon fell to pieces. The realm was split and split infinitesimally, like a family farm. In the general complication our Austrasian region was parcelled off with a long strip of land west of the Rhine, reaching from the Mediterranean to the North Sea, and called, from Lothair II., Lotharingia or Lorraine. This province was bandied from hand to hand among impotent potentates whose nameless names are significant of their insignificance; Louis the Easy-Going, Louis the German, Charles the Bald, Charles the Fat, Louis the Babe, Charles the Simple. The pious peasantry, pasturing their cows in the sweet valleys of Erenz or Sûre, knew little and cared less what particular incompetent filled, at any given moment, the ever-shifting throne of their allegiance.

At length, the last Simpleton exhausting the patience of his Lotharingian subjects, they clap him in prison and place themselves under the sovereignty of Henry the Fowler, King of the Saxons or East Franks. So Luxembourg passes out of France into its true sphere, Germany, under whose banner it was to remain during the five hundred years of its greatness, and to which, when it has finished going the rounds of Austria, Spain, France, Holland, and autonomy, it will probably return. Now appear the Dukes of Lorraine, creatures of the Emperor of Germany; Otho the Great confers that dignity upon his brother, Archbishop Bruno of Cologne; he, for convenience of administration, divides his large Duchy, according to Church jurisdiction, in two parts, High Lotharingia (the dioceses of Trèves, Metz, Strasburg, Toul, and Verdun), and Low Lotharingia (those of Cologne, Utrecht, Liège, Cambrai, and Tournay). How this line runs sheer through the middle of the present Grand Duchy, and what far more ancient division it followed, we have already

seen.¹ Thus the land was divided on the eve of its consolidation.

Now there was a certain Wigéric, or Wiric, or Ricvin (rich in wine), Count of Ardenne, claiming descent from Charlemagne, and owning great property in the vine-growing basin of the Moselle. Weirich is a name to be met with there to-day. Upon his son Henry, Archbishop Bruno conferred the administration of High Lotharingia; and this Henry's brother, SIEGFRIED, was the founder of the illustrious and romanceful House of Luxembourg.

¹ Page 9.

CHAPTER II

THE GOLDEN AGE

WE are got half-way through the Christian Era. The time of reaction against enfeebled and maladminis-
trant royalty is come. It is the Age of Feudalism. Hereditary petty kingship enters upon the scene; the Nobility appears. A great European movement brings a change in the social order. Duke, earl, margrave, count, and baron take the law into their own hands, call the lands after their own names and leave the rest of their substance to their babes. The world's stage is strewn with shreds and patches of sovereignty. Our Lorraine jumps with the times, and the birthday of "Luxembourg", as such, has dawned. The land of which we treat, hitherto a vague shifting circumference without a centre, draws at length into focus. We open the annals of a dynasty destined to produce a Godfrey de Bouillon, father of crusade and founder of the Kingdom of Jerusalem; an Ermesinde, an Emperor Henry VII., a John of Bohemia, a William the Silent, creator of the Dutch Republic.

Back now to the little fortress whose angular name we let loose upon the reader. This ruin, which stood upon two frowning rocks, the Great and Little Bock, Siegfried acquired, repaired, and turned it into a Burg, or fortified castle, which he placed under the patronage of the Blessed

Virgin. The peasantry for miles around, finding he was not a savage, and pleasantly struck by the anomaly, came and ensconced themselves under the protection of this new manor and its lord. In the erewhile lonely valley of the Alzette, haunted with fauns and satyrs, a new thing was seen; beneath the double shade of Siegfried's friendly ramparts where the wilful river doubles quite round the rugged jutting headland, nestled a little colony of farmers, artisans, and tillers of the soil. It was the kernel of a kingdom to come, such as were springing up everywhere in that tenth century. A wall of circumvallation with fosse and seven square towers surrounded the nascent city, a wooden bridge spanned the sinuous chasm. And the little old fort gave its savage name to the city, and later to the whole wide country of which it became capital; which name became *Lutzelbourg*, Little Fortress, and was in course of time softened down to LUXEMBOURG.

Siegfried's outline is vague and mystic upon the page of history. It is certain that he was "Advocate" of Echternach and Trèves Abbeys. The former institution, at this time, needed a lawyer badly. It had been seized by a pack of incontinent wolves calling themselves lay canons, who were spending its funds like water and causing a perfect scandal in the neighbourhood. So the Count used his influence with Emperor Otho, and, turning out the usurping drones, fetched forty good Benedictines from Trèves with abbot at head and installed them in their place. Later, he obtained for the monks what may strike us as a singular privilege for religious—the right to coin money. The charter is the oldest document now extant in the archives of the County. He also liberally endowed Princess Irmine's hospital at Echternach. Valiantly resisting an attack upon his estates by King Lothair of France, he was taken prisoner and shut up in a stronghold on the Marne. But he gained



[To face p. 36]

LUXEMBOURG
(FROM THE BOULEVARD DE LA BASSE PÉTRUSSE)



his freedom and lived thirteen years to continue his beneficence to the Church he loved so well.

He was the founder of one of the greatest fortresses of Europe, and father of a race of emperors and empresses, kings, archbishops, bishops, valiant counts and knights, abbesses, cathedral-builders, crusaders, saints. The Odin, the dim demigod of his country, a primal nimbus of romance encircles him, and legend has been busy with his name. Its compliments are a trifle two-edged. Local folk-lore asserts that he mortgaged his soul to the prince of darkness in consideration of assistance rendered in building his Castle. At the end of thirty years he was to pay up. When the time drew near, he meanly tried to back out by surrounding himself with the saintliest of his friends. Into this holy *milieu*, thought he, no malign power would dare to break. Punctual to the minute, his awful Creditor appeared with a bag, into which he was for popping all that was immortal of the expiring Count. But an excellent monk who was present—his monastery had benefited considerably—swore he saw a white smoke issue from the top of Siegfried's head and mount to heaven. It was therefore proved beyond shadow of doubt that the Evil One had been "done," and that the endowment of religious houses covers a multitude of sins.

According to a more romantic variant, this perilous compact had sprung from a tenderer motive. Hunting in the woods around his castle he had seen Melusina, the lovely Undine of the Alzette. She consented to wed with him on condition that she might shut herself up in the bathroom one day in seven, when he was to make no attempt to see her. For a time all was bliss. But alas for the insatiable curiosity of love! One seventh day, when ill weather forbade the chase, the Count, like Psyche, could not resist temptation. Stealthy as a cat he crept to the forbidden door. Peering through a crack, he saw his beautiful bride

disporting herself in the bath; but O dismay! that body fair and supple, which he had so rapturously caressed, ended in a *paraprosdokian*—an anticlimax—a horrid, green, scaly, serpentine fish's tail! The Count uttered a cry of horror. Melusina, seeing that her secret was out, vanished from his sight, for ever exiled to the sombre depths of her native Alzette.

Since then, in the pale moonbeams, travellers have sometimes seen a strange apparition sitting in the hollows of the precipitous Bock. It is Melusina, bewailing her hapless lot. There she sits, sewing a chemise. This chemise is a Penelopean piece of work, for she makes a stitch only once in seven years. Should she finish her chemise before the spell is broken, down goes Luxembourg Town that instant into the bottomless pit. This is the way to break the spell. Once a century she appears as a serpent, her head crowned with a carcanet in which blazes a fiery carbuncle, holding between her lips a little golden key. If you meet her, and are hardy enough to take the key from the fearsome mouth with your own, you will clasp in your arms a fair princess, whose person, together with an enormous balance which has been increasing at compound interest for nine hundred years, will be yours. An Austrian soldier saw her in 1786, but tremblings overcame him. He probably was not well at the time, for he died in a fit the next day—which gives his snaky story a subjective look. Let us hope some *preux chevalier* will be forthcoming soon, for she will have completed more than a hundred and thirty stitches by now, and time is getting on. But perhaps that chemise is being made on the old-fashioned and more durable principle, like that of the Archduchess Isabella.

The dynasty founded by Siegfried continued in line almost direct until the middle of the fifteenth century, when it gave place to the house of Burgundy. Its scions

were of mixed character. We must judge them in the light of the age with which their line was so closely coeval, and whose spirit they so typically reflected. It was the age of chivalry—hardy, restless, ambitious, extravagant, generous and mean at once; morbidly greedy of power and glory, ends amply justifying any and every means; spitting a life or a kingdom cheerfully upon a point of etiquette; prodigal, beyond all proportion, of fussy energy; naïvely transparent of motive, sensational, unpractical, wild-goose-hunting, delightfully infantine under a deal of amazing pomposity; passionately devout, so long as it could get its own way. It was an age when human nature, emerging from toys, began to care about its collars, and feel adventurous, sentimental, and grown-up. It was the time to which modern Europe, waxing a little stiff in the joints, as it were, looks back with a smile and a sigh.

These Counts of Lutzelbourg were a typic embodiment of this very spirit. They quarrelled, they tilted, they meddled, they grabbed, they borrowed money, they confessed, they talked beautifully. Their intrepid valour in the field has been bruited by chronicler and bard; their piety, such as it was, is doubtless credited to them in a more impartial record. But it seems to me that no one has done justice to their business abilities. Their talent for overdrawing was only exceeded by their genius for raising the wind. Titles and estates they looked upon as bonds negotiable in emergencies. When one contemplates the financial standards of this mediæval German noblesse, the Stock Exchange seems a temple of lofty and transparent altruism. As to their ambition, it was as brilliantly successful as it was blatantly overweening. We find their pedigree emblazoned with imperial purple and punctuated with crowns. Henry VII., Emperor of Germany; Cunegund, Empress and Saint; John the Blind, King of Bohemia; his sisters Marie and

Beatrix, Queens of France and Hungary ; Charles IV., Emperor of Germany ; Wenceslas II., King of Bohemia and Emperor of Germany ; Sigismund, King of Hungary, King of the Romans, and Emperor of Germany ; Albert II. of Austria, King of Hungary, Bohemia, and the Romans : over all these heads the regal planets, passing into conjunction with the lucky star of Siegfried, made horoscope of fame. In 1400 Germany had three Emperors at once—all of them of the house of Luxembourg. Melusina was generous, considering the treatment she had received.

Yet the County itself was the very last to benefit by the magnificence for which it seemed ever to pave the way. Many of these magnates kicked away the ladder by which they had climbed to greatness. If you have too many irons in the fire the smaller ones fall out and get cold. They began by enlarging their patrimony by gradual acquisitions of the country round the capital and absorption of counties and seigneuries in Belgium and elsewhere, until their County grew to at least four times the extent of the present Duchy. On many a towering crest by dale and stream for leagues and leagues every way sprang up those vast embattled castles of doughty nobles, in feoffage of their powerful suzerain, which we shall later visit turn by turn. Rocky Lutzelbourg became the scene of a brilliant court, which vassal-nobles and leal knights adorned. The County grew to be a stepping-stone to power. Then, as always follows when folks mind other folks' business, the later Counts began to neglect their own. They grew altogether too big for the cradle that had nursed them. Being ever in want of capital for their ambitious enterprises, they looked on their estates as a fair field for extortion ; selling and mortgaging them bit by bit, and pawning them not only to uncles, but to sisters, cousins, aunts ; to archbishops and

abbots, dukes of Burgundy, Orleans, Brabant. These very perfect gentle knights were a mercenary set, for all their donations to convents, some of which were just usurious loans to the Almighty with the hope of an exorbitant rate of interest. Often the whole country was in the market for years at a time, going up and down like stocks, the purchasers scarcely knowing where their property was situated. The seigneurs fought and schemed and ran up accounts, and the people had to pay for the tune.

A curious thread running through the whole period is the continuous quarrel kept up with the See of Trèves. The Counts, when they were at home—where no one who really wanted them with a bill or other claim ever thought of looking for them—would pass the time by putting embargoes upon the navigation of their section of the Moselle, which river was the life of Trèves. This annoyed the princely Metropolitans, with whom they had hereditary feud. Count Conrad I., the fourth from Siegfried, bubbling over with the joy of life, took the contemporary Archbishop prisoner while the latter was on a Confirmation-tour. For this Pope Alexander II. very properly ordered him, on pain of excommunication, to apologise to the outraged prelate and make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, which cost him his life. It is typical of the gay improvidence of the family. Henry IV., the Blind and the Unlucky, is an interesting personality, in that he reigned sixty years; did not marry till the sixtieth year of his life, had no child by his first wife, married again at seventy-five, divorced his second wife immediately, had a serious illness at eighty-nine, took it as a warning, recalled his second wife, got well, had a daughter the next year, and lived within a few months of a hundred. The story is that the nymph Melusina, who could not be delivered from her watery prison until ten kings should issue from her line, thought

it time to interfere, and, taking the form of the Countess, rejuvenated the nonagenarian with the happy result above-named.

Ermesinde (1196-1247), the daughter in question and his successor, was worth all her fathers and children put together ; a practical, humane, and sensible woman in advance of her time. She married Thibaut, Count of Bar, who set himself successfully to recover the provinces his father-in-law had lost. After his death she consoled herself with Waleran, son of the Duke of Limbourg. The luxury and brilliancy of this wedding were worthy of an imperial court ; the list of fifty counts and seigneurs from far and near who were present affords evidence of the great power and extent of the County. Ermesinde was a social reformer, an apostle of justice and communal liberty. She endowed schools and hospitals ; enfranchised many boroughs, establishing judges and *échevins* to protect the rights of the burghers ; taxed commerce reasonably ; befriended the religious life ; organised military service, the men of each borough following their Seigneur to war and serving the first week at their own expense, the second at that of the borough, the rest at his ; and licensed hunting and fishing for the burghers, except with dogs and nets, which were forbidden. By peaceable means she added many a fief to her dominions, Laroche and Ligny among the rest.

Touching the foundation of the great Abbey of Clairefontaine there is a story. Near Arlon was Bardenburg Castle, of Celtic foundation, where Charles Martel had lived, and Charlemagne had vainly wooed St. Amalberga, the beautiful daughter of the Lord of Rodange. Close to the castle, in a shady glen, leapt a limpid fountain, once blessed by St. Bernard and called Clairefontaine, after his Abbey of Clairvaux. Here Ermesinde, sleeping under an oak, saw a vision. A Lady of resplendent beauty stood

by the miraculous spring, Child in arms, and surrounded by a flock of sheep whose spotless whiteness was but enhanced by two black horns which formed a cross upon their backs. A holy anchorite explained to the Countess that the Madonna willed her to found in that spot a community of virgins vowed to Her service. The issue was the Cistercian Abbey of Clairefontaine, where noble ladies long served God. The castle Ermesinde built, together with the Abbey, survives only in ruins ; but the beauteous valley still enfolds its chapel with the tomb of Ermesinde, oldest burial-place of all Luxembourg's sovereigns.

Then came her son Henry Blondel, called the Great ; crusader with St. Louis, doughty warrior, land-winner, peace-maker at home and abroad. In his reign we are to place the Great Cow War. I shall not affront my reader by assuming that he has never heard of the Great Cow War. Yet for the refreshment of his memory I will state that the Great Cow War was not a primitive bull-fight, but a long campaign arising out of an extradition question touching the execution of a cow-stealing peasant of Namur. This triangular war raged between Namur, Liège, and Luxembourg for two years, and was no laughing matter, for it cost more than thirty thousand lives, and doomed nearly forty castles and villages to fire and sword. But what was a burgher more or less ? Only a pawn in the three-cornered game of pride and passion between two Counts and a Bishop.

The next Count, Henry VI., began badly by incurring excommunication over the Moselle matter. No son of Siegfried could let this alone. It was in the blood. This ban was never removed, though it probably slipped the Count's own memory in the political strain to which he was afterwards subjected. He is therefore known by the cheery sobriquet of Henry the Accursed.

Another profane act of his was to kidnap the Bishop of Liège while hunting in a forest and give him six months in the castle dungeons for insulting his sister ; from which involuntary retreat he would only liberate him in consideration of a substantial sum. We can scarcely wonder, in the lurid light which such conduct throws upon his disposition, that his reign was one long war. The war was that of the Limbourg Succession. That vacant Duchy being in dispute between two relatives, each, in the approved fashion of the times, sold his claim. The purchasers were, on the one side, Henry and his brother ; on the other, John, Duke of Brabant. The two parties stood up to each other at the battle of Woeringen, one of the greatest combats of mediæval chivalry. All the knightly flower of Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Lower Rhine was there. The Counts had twenty thousand men, the Duke, fourteen thousand. The Archbishop of Cologne requested the Counts to put off the fray till Monday, as it was Saturday, and fighting on Sunday was forbidden in his diocese. They replied that they "had beached their whale, and did not mean to let him escape for any frightened priest." The prelate then urged that if they must profane the Sabbath, he ought to have the Duke as his perquisite. "There again you are wrong," said the brothers ; "he shall die." But this proved premature.

The battle then took place, and a sanguinary affair it was. Count Henry, in the *mêlée*, fell upon the Duke of Brabant with the fury of a wild beast ; they threw away lance and sword, and each, seizing the other by the throat, tried to drag him from his horse. Thrice they met thus, but were parted by their knights ; the fourth time Henry was stabbed by a Brabançon chevalier, fell, and was trampled out of recognition. His three brothers perished with him. Thus nobly died the Four Brothers of Luxembourg, cover-

ing their house with glory. A Flemish poet called Van Heelu, who fought on the other side, was so greatly impressed with their prowess that he has celebrated it in an epos of about ten thousand lines, which lack of space forbids me to transcribe. The quarrel was nobly repaired : for the Duke made peace with Henry's widow and gave his daughter in marriage, with a handsome dowry, to her son, the Sabbatical Bishop burying the hatchet and obtaining a dispensation—for the young people were near relations ; and at the wedding-breakfast the young Count magnanimously gave his hand to the Brabançon knight who had caused his father's death.

This young Count became Henry VII., King of the Romans, and Emperor of Germany—the first of her sovereigns, since Frederic II., to mix with Italian affairs and be crowned at Rome. He was a strange medley of small avarice, impulsive generosity, and ambition most astute. He, like his fathers, could not leave the Archbishop in the enjoyment of his Moselle. He had the meanness to put up a toll-house on a little island in that important stream, and levy small sums on passing vessels. They of Trèves promptly razed this erection to the ground ; whereupon the Count proceeded to the assault of the city. His soldiers mutinied, however ; and the end of it all was that the combatants flew, figuratively speaking, into one another's arms in an offensive and defensive alliance. A few years later Henry diplomatically secured the See for his brother, who was only twenty-two years old at the time. Having been brought up at the French court, and armed "knight" by Philip the Fair, Henry was every inch a courtier, and knew well how to use to the best advantage the éclat of his father's prowess at Woeringen, where he ought to have been seeing service himself. When Pope Clement V. was enthroned at Lyon, in 1305, he appeared with a magnificent train and

attracted the Pontiff's attention : which explains young Baldwin's consecration, and his own subsequent coronation at Aix-la-Chapelle. In our description of Simmern¹ we shall speak of his death and the stories bound up with it.

In justice it must be said that, while Count, Henry devoted himself to the social welfare of his subjects. He suppressed as far as possible the seigneurial wars, being actually acute enough to perceive that the inundation of whole villages with blood, in settlement of aristocratic bickerings worthy of the nursery, involved a certain disproportion, and was scarcely necessary as a prelude to the tears of generous reconciliation in which the quarrel was usually wiped out at last. Acts of brutality, in those polite days, were called "Judgments of God"; Count Henry, quite anachronistic in his perceptions, sagely regulated these Divine dispensations by means of an efficient police.

His son and successor, John the Blind, was married with great pomp, at fourteen years old, to Elizabeth of Bohemia, his imperial father generously settling upon him that kingdom, which was not his to settle. After the wedding he had to go and conquer his kingdom. John is of the whole dynasty certainly the most interesting to ourselves, as every schoolboy knows all about the battle of Crécy. John is the hero of the Luxembourg folk. They have forgotten the rest. Turbulent, prodigal, intrepid, ambitious, he is the very miniature of the spirit of chivalry. He greatly disliked his barbarous Slavonic kingdom, and his wife too, for she always set herself against his improvements ; so he left her to govern it in her own way, and became practically a soldier of fortune. His aimless life was much like the story of the "King of Bohemia and his Seven Castles," which Corporal Trim was never allowed to finish ; though whether the king in question was our John or not remains

¹ Chapter xv.

a mystery to this day. It was he who set the extortionate, extravagant, Europe-scouring example that estranged the duchy a century later. He was for ever upon some mad expedition. Was there anywhere in Europe an outrage to avenge, a revolt to quash, a throne to protect, a lady to champion, John was there. He made himself felt in Bohemia, Austria, Poland, Italy, Belgium, France ; on every field of battle his great sword gleamed up at nick of time. One day he would be settling a vexed succession at Metz ; the next he was attacking paganism in Lithuania and evangelising the shores of the Baltic at the sword-edge. From the Baltic to the Danube, from Vistula to Moselle and Seine, his name was a bogie to frighten children with. Undoubtedly he was valiant, loyal, and energetic ; unkind persons said he was a little interfering. Everyone agreed as to his sincerity—"his eye is single," they said ; and so it was, for he had lost the other through a cold. One feels sorry for John. His dream was obviously the imperial purple ; it was always in his eye, but it never fell upon his shoulders—he was too pyrotechnic.

Pecuniarily, John was egregious. Seldom did he come home except to raise or borrow, or pawn to uncle Baldwin and other bishops (who with their fatherly functions appear to have combined a sort of avuncular relation to the aristocracy in general—whence, evidently, the French expression *mont de piété*) large slices of the heritage of his fathers. He would then go off jousting or preaching or duelling or espousing some forlorn cause, until the money was spent, when he would begin to feel homesick again and come back and put some more fatherland up the archiepiscopal spout. All things considered one wonders why his name stands out so signally in the memory of his countrymen. The secret is that he was born at Luxembourg, which, in a Count of Luxembourg, is a curiosity ; that he

instituted a great fair in that city during St. Bartholomew's octave, which continues still ; that he never put one hand into his people's pockets without confirming, in some inexpensive way, their liberties with the other ; that he fortified the delightful village of Diekirch ; and that his doughty though doubtful deeds and noble death have reflected glory upon his country. Whether readers of Froissart or no, all know how, blind and aged as he was, he rushed into the fray at Crécy with his two esquires, and gloriously died : "*A donc dist li gentils roys, qui tout aveugles estoit, 'Biau signeur, je vous pri chièrement et par la foi que vous me devés, que vous me menés si avant en la bataille que je puisse ferir un coup d'espée' . . . Mais li vaillans homs fu là occis*" ; and how our Black Prince took his Bohemian ostrich-plume and motto, *Ich Dien*—so familiar to all the world to-day as the blazonry of the Prince of Wales, whom God preserve.

This John was from infancy a martyr to the visual weakness which beset the line of Siegfried. It was inexorable to medical treatment. At forty years of age, having developed ophthalmia in a North German fog, he consulted a Breslau doctor, whose treatment made him worse. On receipt of the bill he was transported with rage, and had the unfortunate practitioner sewn up in a sack and thrown into the Oder. He next applied to a famous Arabian eye-specialist at Prague. This wary man of medicine, before prescribing, extracted from his royal patient a signed indemnity in case of failure. It was as well ; for his régime resulted in the complete loss of John's right eye. This catastrophe set up an aggravation of the remaining orb, which impelled John to consult the renowned medical faculty at Montpellier ; the luminaries of which institution crowned the achievements of their German and Oriental brethren in science by rendering him entirely blind.

John's was a restless life, but compared with his post-

mortem experiences it was unhealthily sedentary. After Crécy our noble Edward III. sent his body to his son Emperor Charles, who buried him in the Abbey of Munster at Luxembourg. But two hundred years afterwards that fane was demolished, and John was transferred to the Franciscan convent in the neighbourhood. In fifty years' time the old Abbey was rebuilt, and the royal remains were again exhumed and deposited therein. Nearly a century passed by, and the Abbey-church was destroyed by Louis XIV.; when once more this nomad monarch, a true Bohemian in death as in life, was disturbed, and subterraneously arranged in a Benedictine establishment. But this retreat again proved a mere *pied à terre*, for in the ill-fated year 1795 the town was taken by the French, and the mortal part of the peripatetic John was again scooped up and deposited in a museum. The remains were however rescued by a patriotic countryman and presented to King Frederick William IV. of Prussia; who, determined to put a stop to the vagaries of this landloping prince, erected a superb and very heavy mausoleum over him at Castel on the Sarre, where he has so far (though we prejudge nothing) enjoyed unbroken repose. His subterraneous descents were thus six in all. If they do not move him again in the meantime, that final translation, which in one direction or another awaits all, will make the seventh—and round it off.

John's heir was Wenceslas. But the latter's elder half-brother, Charles IV. of Germany, assumed the government as regent during his minority. He took over the title of Count of Luxembourg, by what right he himself best knew, for nobody else had any idea. Faithful to the family tradition of living abroad beyond his income, he soon fell into the hands of the Bishops. His principal hobby, on those rare occasions when he was in residence, was robbing Peter to pay Paul. He made advances to uncle Baldwin,

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and uncle Baldwin made advances to him—50,000 marks, with the whole dominion, this time, for security. With this temporary accommodation he took out of pawn a considerable amount of outside territory which the Bishops and others who held it were on the point of putting in the window, so to speak, as Unredeemed Pledges, and quite satisfied himself that he was the saviour of his country. This intellectual feat will prepare the reader to learn that he founded a university at Prague, in which he endowed scholarships for the youth of Luxembourg; though whether he himself assumed the chair of political economy there is not recorded. In order to console his brother for any slight determination towards the dexter page, which he might find in the patrimonial pass-book, he imperially raised the County to a Duchy; conferred on the dukes the privilege of holding the rein of the Emperor's war-horse—a piece of officiousness, one might have thought, peculiarly irritating both to the animal and its rider—and appointed them *ex officio* carvers-in-ordinary at Imperial banquets, which was more practical. A week later he added to the former office the distinction of carrying the sword *before* the Emperor on military occasions; though how the two could be combined with dignity, or what must have been the joint effect on the steed's nerves, is matter for musing.

The young Wenceslas, first "Duke" of Luxembourg, when he succeeded in convincing his august brother that he really intended to rule his own roost without interference, managed things better. By his marriage he became one of the richest and most powerful lords of the Lower Rhine, being Duke of Brabant and Limbourg, Count of Chiny, Margrave of Antwerp, and much more. He set himself to discharge his brother's debts, and recovered a large portion of the estates which that sunny trustee had "misapplied." Under his sway things improved; industry flourished, com-

merce was organised, social conditions became less one-sided, towns were enfranchised right and left. Wenceslas had some glimmering of the rights of property. The vassals, herding dog-like under their master's tables, began to realise, daring as was the conception, that their souls were to some extent their own. The right of "Mortmain", which was French for saying that at the death of a serf the gentleman at the big house could make a long arm and maraud his best cow or cosiest armchair, was happily done away. Wenceslas endowed twenty convents, but seems to have been a religious man. In extant documents he uses the formula "*by the grace of God*", for the insertion of which his predecessors had not had time. So greatly did he endear himself to his people that when he incurred the family excommunication—something like the "Curse of the Catafalques"—from Trèves, the clergy of his capital took no sort of notice except to send a round robin to the Pope, who instantly removed the ban. This "*gentil duc Wincelant*", gallant, handsome, generous, lover of dance and tourney and all good cheer, reigned thirty-one years; and at length, feeling the end approaching, had himself carried in a litter to his beloved Luxembourg, where, he said, "*il pourrait mourir plus satisfait*". If he is not the Good King Wenceslas of the carol, he deserves to be.

With his nephew and successor, Wenceslas II., Charles' son and Emperor of Germany, a selfish libertine, begins the decline of Luxembourg's great individuality; the pitiable sacrifice of five centuries' splendid labour to cold greed and cowardly heartlessness. He was called Fainéant, Do-Nought; a mistaken estimate, for he did a great deal. He was excessively partial to champagne, which art had not yet made to sparkle, but which was quite as heady in its still state. The story is that he first tasted it at Rheims, whither he had gone to hold an interview with the King of France

upon Church matters; and his delicate remark was, "That's the right sort of oil; it makes one's chops stick together." He was as honest as a company-promoter, and made great pother about honesty in his subjects. He would walk out disguised in the most approved Alraschid style, and make small purchases of fish, bread, or groceries; then, on returning home, would carefully weigh them. If they proved short weight, the tradesman was punished with prison or death, and the goods were quite seriously given to the poor. The effect of these high-souled measures was such, that during Wenceslas' reign people could carry gold and silver openly about the streets without the smallest fear of robbery. Meanwhile the Emperor was displaying, in affairs of state, a light-hearted knavery which led at last to his deposition; and the most pitiable victim of his dishonesty was his Duchy, which was destined to lose its autonomy thereby.

But at the deathbed of Siegfried's line we must "seek the woman." Melusina was the guardian-spirit of its spring; the evil genius of its fall was the unspeakable Elizabeth of Goerlitz. To this woman, on her marriage with Duke Antony of Brabant, her uncle Wenceslas had promised a dowry of 120,000 Rhenish florins. Money, however, being scarce and posts cheap, he said he would "owe it her," and gave her his Duchy as security. Three years after this her husband was killed at Agincourt; so finding his family more attached to her room than her company, she married a dispensed bishop and came and settled down at Luxembourg.

But previously to Elizabeth's appearance, Wenceslas had for twenty-five years been gaily pawning the Duchy over and over again to quite a procession of potentates, without a thought as to the consequences. All these, or their representatives, had by now arrived, and in support of their several claims, which were all equally valid or invalid, were filling the unhappy country with slaughter, the burghers

scurrying like rats to the fortified capital for safety. This state of things, which continued for decades, is described in the archives of the city as *bellum omnium contra omnes*. Meanwhile, through four successive nominal ducal reigns, the leech Elizabeth (she had tired of her clerical husband in a few years, whereupon he died of poison) calmly continued her extravagant debaucheries, herself pawning the Duchy in her turn to a new Archbishop of Trèves, until things were got in such a tangle between episcopal brokers and noble money-lenders that nobody had the smallest idea to whom the property belonged. But she was working far deeper mischief all this time, mischief destined to betray the country into the hands of its eventual conqueror. Suddenly, the crash came. Philip of Burgundy appeared upon the scene.

We are now introduced to a type of person very different from all these rival pigmies. A digressive word may not be out of place. Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy and Count of Flanders, a man of immense ambition, powerful ability, and signal place in history, was in the act of carving out that great dominion of seventeen provinces which were to be known in after-history as the United Netherlands. The Valois Dukes held their straggling estates in fief of two crowns, France and the Empire. They held Flanders, Artois, Rhetel, Auxerre and Nevers as dependents of France, and the County Palatine of Burgundy as vassals of the Empire. This wide and scattered heritage was the nucleus of the great future Netherlands ; and its union under one prince, and him a foreigner, was daily widening its tendency to split off from the Empire and France both. The dream of the Burgundian house was the consolidation of the two masses. This was eventually worked out in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, by the prudence of Philip, and by the daring of his son, Charles the Bold. Thus the Valois father and son were, so far as the great United Provinces

were concerned, makers of the vast empire of Charles the Fifth. By the time, then, of our Luxembourg's ripeness for fate, Philip had just finished drawing all round it the circle of his power. He had got into his hands the whole Netherland territory, except the ecclesiastical province of Liège ; had united under his sway, first, the County of Namur, then Brabant and Limbourg, Flanders, Hainault, Zeeland, Holland. The getting of Luxembourg, with its mighty fortress on the high-road between Flanders and the Rhine, and its wide dependencies, was to him a matter of the last importance.

Now the beldam Goerlitz was Philip's aunt, and it was an open secret that the two had been plotting for years. Consequently when the Burgundian entered the lists and took Luxembourg in one night, nobody was surprised. People's minds had been prepared. It happened on this wise. Just as the Archbishop was about to pay down his 120,000 florins and enter into possession of the Duchy, he was informed that Elizabeth of Goerlitz had made other arrangements. She had negotiated a compact with her nephew, agreeing to renounce in his favour all her rights over Luxembourg and Chiny, he engaging to pay her a life-annuity of 7,000 florins, a sum of 2,000 florins down for her pressing liabilities, and 16,000 a full year after he should have taken possession ; and, in fine, to take her jewels out of pawn for her—a feminine clause, dearer in the old creature's eyes than her two duchies, so lightly flicked away with a stroke of the pen.

On the news of this covenant the Archbishop, who was in wholesome dread of Philip, quietly went to the wall. A few months later appeared two proclamations in the capital. The Duchess announced that being only a woman and a widow to boot, and feeling conscientiously inadequate to protect the interests of her beloved Luxembourggeois, she had deemed it her duty most reluctantly to place the

government in more competent hands. The Duke assured them that he had unwillingly, all unworthy as he was, taken over the reins of office in response to the earnest and repeated entreaties of his dear aunt, whose devotion to her loyal subjects was only equalled by her modesty (which latter statement was certainly true). The first act of the people, on the appearance of these egregious announcements, was to rise in a body and put the woman Goerlitz outside the city with her whole suite; their next, to place themselves at the disposal of the rightful Duke, William of Saxony, who sent an army to protect his rights against the intruder, was welcomed with open arms by the whole nobility to a man, and "occupied" every town and stronghold throughout the Duchy—theoretically.

Then Philip quitted Dijon with a magnificent array, and in one unbroken triumphal march arrived at Luxembourg. His soldiers scaled the walls in the darkness of the night, massacred the guard, opened the gates with crowbars, poured into the city with cries of *Noire Dame, ville gagnée, Bourgogne, Bourgogne*, and finished the story of mediæval Luxembourg without a blow. The only attempt at defence was made by the provost of the town, Jean Chalop, who threw himself on the foe and drove a lance through the arm of a Picardy knight. He was instantly massacred. Luxembourg, with its hundred and thirty dependent seigneurs, was become a Valois fief. The town was given up to pillage, and its franchises, seal, and properties were confiscated; a bastard of Philip's was appointed governor, with a council of local seigneurs. Next year, however, at the instance of his wife, Philip made partial restoration of privileges. As to the Duke of Saxony, his mouth was shut with a present of that mystical sum, 120,000 florins, which everyone seems to have agreed in regarding as the precise market-value of the Duchy. For all that, his successors

never abated their pretensions. They were styling themselves Dukes of Luxembourg as late as the eighteenth century.

And what of the old Goerlitz? The fairy Melusina had her revenge; for the Duchess died, full of years and rheumatism (*arthriticis doloribus*, says the chronicler Chifflet), in that palace at Trèves which the town had given to her ancestor Henry VII., but so impoverished that she had to be buried by the parish. Contemporary records speak faithfully of her: "*sie war eine Buhlerin.*"

Thus this illustrious house, better at feats of arms and foreign distinction than at domestic and economic virtues, came to its end in bloody war and forfeited its patrimony to a stranger, simply because not one of its four last representatives could or would raise 120,000 florins to take his property out of pledge. To this day the people of Trèves play a game called *Mensch*. When a player loses the highest stake, they say—

"Count Luxembourg has squandered all his money,
Squandered all his money in one night."

The Luxembourggeois play the game too; but they say "Herr Falkenstein"—the Archbishop who excommunicated good Wenceslas I.

Curiously enough, while this dynasty was dying, another was being born of its travail. Its last scion but two, the Emperor Sigismund, sold the margraviate and electorate of Brandenburg to a humble country-squire, Frederic of Hohenzollern, upon whose obscure stock was destined to bud the kingdom of Prussia and, at last, the great stalwart German Empire of to-day. The moral is that lighthearted and romantic extravagance, though personally engaging, dissipates a kingdom; while close-fisted and persevering thrift, an ugly virtue at best, builds up empires. The chivalric glamour of the house of Siegfried lives only in Lied and legend; Kaiser Wilhelm sits on the throne of the Hohenzollern.

CHAPTER III

FEUDAL SOCIETY

WE shall pause for a glance at the social conditions of the period we have traversed. They were not quite so black as some may please to paint them.

If there be any coign of Europe which is stamped with the image and superscription of feudality, it is here. As you tramp through coppice and dale, tracking by lowly valley or lonely mountain-ridge the babbling family of streams which all seek a mother's breast in the Moselle, your eyes and ears are opened and you see visored knights spurring across the meadows and hear the clang of onset and the thunder of siege. For wherever there rises a rocky cone or the river doubles a lofty headland, there frowns the Castle, a battered giant, there sleeps the hamlet at its grey imperious foot. And over every stream-lapped prominence and upon every high hill, there has been ruin; a blasting breath has swept over all, making each proud burg a heap of stones piled against the eternal horizon. This country has been, since it was a country, one of Europe's bloodiest age-long battlefields. You cannot take a long walk but you will light upon some monument of human pride and passion. This dawning time of Christian Europe was a travail of physical force. Might reigned supreme with fantastic honour as its handmaid. At Ambition's footstool Religion and Right were vassals. They

have since come in some measure to their own, and now fill the throne they served.

Yet this Might-age was no time of unmitigated oppression. Do not think it. The social relations of seigneur and serf were based on a principle of mutual advantage. Out of the very absence of law a sort of unifying law was born. Might being right, the common folk, forbidden arms on their own account, would place themselves under the protection of the mighty. It was a compact of ward with work. Serf wanted safety from murder, lust, and rapine; lord wanted food and fine raiment, domestic service, care for his horses, rank and file to defend his halls and follow his troop of cavalry to battle. The Vassal gave hands and heart and head; the Noble gave in return the safeguard of his valiant sword and the ægis of his towering stronghold. The manor which frowned, dark and supercilious, from the crest of the mountain, was not a menace to the humble chimneys that nestled round its base, but *ein feste Burg*, their strong tower against the enemy. A seigneur who oppressed or browbeat his vassals unduly would have been left to the tender mercies of his marauding neighbours. There was no obligation upon them to stay. It was a case of "you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours"; and this meant true loyal love full often on both sides.

Moreover, the serf's case was not hopeless. Liberty and even the honours of chivalry were open to him. If he distinguished himself in feats of arms, and so attracted attention, there was always the chance of promotion to noblesse. Loyal valour and contempt of death were the fruitful conditions of knighthood then; not groceries. He might save his lord's life, or his lady's; or he might be the valorous sole survivor of a raid upon the borough, in which case there was a chance of his mistress bestowing her hand, or the hand of her daughter, upon him, rendering

him the founder of a new lineage of noble blood ; or distinction might come to him in requital of less honourable services. The mediæval peasant has posed, in novels of a certain type, as a down-trodden worm. All things considered, he was not quite that. He was broken on wheels, he was flung down wells, he was forgotten in oubliettes, the manorial door-posts were decorated with his head ; *bien entendu* ; but there is something to be said on the other side. At times, I strongly suspect, he was an exceedingly trying person ; pig-headed, pious, deceitful, sottish, brutal, doltish, apt to make a martyr of himself. In such cases one's sympathies are with the aristocrat. The pendulum has swung back, and to the twentieth-century domestic servant we concede a sort of omnipotence, which she is not indisposed to abuse. She spends her wages upon inferior finery, is not innocent of selfishness, and has forgotten, I fear, the old beautiful spirit of loving pride in master and mistress. Here again, of course, there is something to be said on both sides. Still, taking it all round, I think the vaunted "emancipation" of modern times cuts two ways.

From the twelfth century onward, in our County, successive charters of franchise regulated the feudal relation, many of which tended to the curtailment of the absolute power of the count, baron, and other landed lordings. These local documents, in German, French, and Latin, are the windows which let in light upon the social conditions of the time. We find that the serf, though he held his property under a nominal feoffage from his suzerain, practically owned and enjoyed it himself, and handed it down to his heirs as his own. In requital of his menial labour for his lord, the latter must allow him food and wine expressly stipulated as to quantity and kind. Some of these charters are amusing reading, and bespeak a certain

rustic *bien-être*, in spite of the predominance of pig—which useful if somewhat monotonous commodity seems to have been worked up into a marvellous number of culinary forms and phases. On certain occasions the seigneur must entertain his mayors, *échevins*, and justiciaries; the number and nature of the dishes he must offer them is expressly stated. The documents were copied out by a clerk and held by the ancients of the village, who placed them in evidence at every change of masters. We may imagine with what jealous care every letter would be guarded by the bourgeois. One of these menus, if I have the old German right, provides that before the *échevins* and their wives shall be set “boiled beef with mustard, pork with bread, rice, roast-pig with one sauce, cheese, bread, and wine without water in it.”

One may gather that a breath of social liberty early inspired the dwellers of Arden's heaths and woods. Do not suppose that the horrors of the French Revolution were reactive against these earlier feudal conditions by any means. The cause that led to the bloody sunset of the eighteenth century was the exact reversal of these conditions. It was the later centralisation of this fragmentary system, whereby the nobles degenerated from a more or less beneficent village sovereignty into court sycophants, becoming in their turn vassals of the pride and lust of kings, that made straight the awful way of that Nemesis. It is one-man tyranny that begets one or other of two evils, Chinese apathy or sanguinary revolution. The autocrats of France bound men together against themselves. The minor mediæval dukes and counts and princes kept them apart. European peasant-society was an agglomeration of contented, insanitary, ignorant, dirty, happy municipal microcosms, every one the natural enemy of every other, bubbling over for very joy of life in mutual, cordial detestation. It

was not such a bad time, taking it all round. Every village was a kingdom, the hub of the universe, intermarrying within itself, and delighting to keep up feuds with its neighbours, sometimes for centuries; feuds whose "ghosts", as Ibsen would say, haunt many a hamlet still. There were no roads to speak of, except such patches as the Romans had left. Means of communication were hardly worth mentioning. If count or baron happened to be away from home he might return to find his dominions reduced to matchwood. Kings and emperors failed to restrain the turbulent performances of the nobility for three reasons: first, because they rarely heard of them till they were all over; secondly, because, hearing of them, they had no means of reaching the spot in any sort of time; thirdly, because, not particularly caring unless their own interests were concerned, they generally did not try. The fatigues and perils of an ordinary journey in those days would soon have killed our modern folk. In all these conditions, where was the germ of Revolution? It was not there.

The vitality of these people must have been something phenomenal. Decimated, year after year, by war, famine, pestilence arising out of overcrowding and ignorance of the simplest laws of hygiene, and the ill results of intermarriage in a small village for centuries—all evils which wrought ravages inconceivable—they yet lived and multiplied; a few decades of peace and plenty soon filled the gaps; the strong survived; old inventories show that the towns of Ardenne were at least as populous in the Middle Age as they are to-day. My own suspicion is that medicine and "hygiene" have done as little for the human physique as Protestant enlightenment has done for morals; that is, rather less than nothing. They may have stamped out or mitigated certain diseases; but have they strengthened the stamina of the individual? We do not need the

modern statistical wails of "physical deterioration", or even the evidence of our eyes, to tell us that under mediæval life-conditions the English race, as it is at this present, would have become in a generation or two considerably reduced. We can feel that in ourselves.

Nor, as touching morals, has civilisation civilised the beast, half ape half tiger, which sleeps eternal in human nature. It was not the peculiar nursling of the "Dark Ages", that beast. They contributed marauders, brigands, oppressors, rebels; we provide anarchists, female post-office officials, dynamitards, Hooligans, the man-woman, regicides, sots and—a commodity unknown to those older ages—vulgarity. Even the latest gospel, that of the new Trinity—Sanitation, Self-help, and Cheap English Classics—seems destined to fail. In the province of the Beautiful, we pay the highest possible compliment to the dark past—we imitate it. So sterile in beauty are we grown, that we are fain to fill our æsthetic belly with the husks that our forefathers did not eat. We ransack the ancestral scullery. We adorn our drawing-rooms with Tudor warming-pans and Jacobean dressers and kitchen-chairs; if we could light upon a Plantagenet scrubbing-brush or a Norman spittoon, we should probably worship it. This below-stairs atavism we call "Art", with a capital A. We had thought the old ages dark; someone discovered that they were Quaint—and all was light. After this let us be civil; for an age whose very pots and pans were a joy for ever cannot have been so far sunk in spiritual darkness after all. They butchered, they swore, they abducted, they worshipped the Saints; but one merit they certainly had, which some of their self-conscious, affected, and sentiment-logged descendants may well envy—they never talked about Art.

Let us pass to these grey ruins, that render our walks so visionary. We shall consider some of them more par-

ticularly later. The design of the builders is resistance ; architectural beauty and domestic comfort take a secondary place. A local type more or less constant runs through all. The chief part, the vertebral column as it were of the castle, is the Donjon or Belfry. It occupies the centre, or the highest and most inaccessible position on the mountain ; and forms the family's last refuge in case of siege. If inhabited, its ground-floor is an immense kitchen, with a great gaping oven in the solid masonry such as one may sometimes see preserved to this day ; above this, a sitting-room serves as a place of family reunion ; a higher floor still is devoted to the sleeping-apartments. All the rooms are vaulted ; a movable ladder gives access to a trap-door in the roof, or one mounts by a staircase winding secretly in the great thickness of the walls ; the light straggles in through tall narrow slit-windows, widening inwards, barred and thickly-shuttered—mere loopholes. Perhaps the chapel, with its apses, is on one of these floors. Near the donjon, in the keep, is a large cistern for rain-water ; or a well, sunk hundreds of feet in the rock to a greater depth than the valley's level, gives access to a perennial crystal spring. The older the castle, the larger the premises ; stables, barns, outhouses, cellars, as at Bourscheid, Brandenburg, Larochette, all afford asylum to the whole village, with their best of property and cattle, in time of war. In some cases, as at Vianden, a dark and ugly dungeon wakes shudders, as you lift up the oaken trap and peer down into its fetid blackness ; think of the women and children making merry around board and hearth, while some poor devil hungers and shivers and curses God !

There is no "drive" to this country-seat. No entrance but a narrow passage, winding round it, perhaps three times. The inner parapet of this passage is perforated with embrasures, through which the ladies and children of the

family can welcome the intruder with playful little pleasantries—a douche of boiling oil or red-hot pitch, or such other bonbons as every hospitable house-party always kept handy for the purpose of entertaining strangers “unawares”. Along the passage at intervals would be a barbican furnished with a portcullis ; while a fosse with drawbridge surrounds the whole edifice, above which, here and there, rises from the wall a loopholed turret from which the stranger can be amused with a rain of scented, warmed, or polyangular objects—those “At Home” cards, so to speak, which formed so cheery a feature of young European society. A watch-tower, scowling from some lofty point of observation, shelters the sentinel, whose duty it is to advertise the family when he sees company coming. The unit, in those disintegrate days, was the householder, therefore every house was a city. All things considered, an afternoon call must have been a somewhat serious undertaking. A mediæval hostess was always careful to keep the kettle boiling, for one never knew who might drop in to tea.

Great ingenuity has been displayed in the selection of sites. In the northern part preference was given to a sharp promontory doubled by a ribbon of river. Inaccessibility on three sides, in such cases, is Nature’s gift ; the slope behind the headland is defended by a deep artificial fosse, whose stones yield material for walls ; these latter are from two to four yards in thickness. Of this class are the interesting Castle of Vianden and those of Brandenbourg and Esch-on-the-Sûre. If the village be not close to the castle, it means that the former was there first ; at Bourscheid there is a mile’s interval, for the village, which is nearly 1600 feet above the sea and high above the castle height, was planted by the vantage-loving Romans long before. In the southern part, where the “Luxembourg sandstone” escarps in abrupt masses, its steeps form a basis and a buttress for the manor,

which is built where needful into the rock's embrace with a deep fosse surrounding ; of this sort are Larochette, Beaufort, Hollenfeltz, Ansembourg. A third form is the castle on the marshy plain, guarded merely by its own might and surrounded by arms of the stream, as at Schoenfels near Mersch. We stand before these shattered, time-battered muniments, and picture the siege. The assailants silently sap the walls ; through the breaches they discharge into the enclosure, from giant catapults, great stones, blazing brands, even rotting carrion-filth ; the besieged from the walls reply with a volley of molten lead, or an unlooked-for sally brings the clash of swords ; the surrounding country is damaged to a considerable extent, and the hubbub resounds appallingly through the valley ; but somehow nobody (except perhaps an inoffensive peasant or two) gets very seriously hurt. Before the invention of artillery and explosives, these holds could be held against an armed force for long periods by a mere handful of men ; but surprise, and tireless persistence, these were ever the bane of garrisons in war as in love ; and before one or other of these, by dint of gunpowder and French vindictiveness, all the burgs whose ruins are our milestones in this storied Arden have fallen soon or late. The hills that bear them stood before them ; and stand on.

Fifteenth century and artillery being arrived, this excessive structural strength became useless. The monk Schwartz has had more influence upon domestic architecture than all the Inigo Joneses and Adams in the world. Ramparts of stone and bars of iron, before his devil's lightning and all its developments, confessed themselves straw. It was hopeless. This gave men time to turn round, as it were ; to think of appearances, of the conditions of comfort and decency. So in course of time we find the feudal manor become sightlier and more habitable. It rides no longer on the mountain-crest, comes down to

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common earth ; its windows widen, its walls grow thin ; and the spirit of beauty, franchised and protected by devastating death, begins to breathe about its battlements and halls. Examples of this transition are the beautiful and many-dated castles of Beaufort and Clervaux. Thus Art becomes the foster-child of a black dust, between whose grimy grains sleeps the fire of Gehenna.

But were there no houses, properly so called, in this Middle Age ? no happy mean between manor and hovel ? Not much ; for in Middle Age there was no Middle Class, to speak of. Yet isolated houses there were, too ; but being slighter than the massy rock-strongholds they have left few traces in the land. I have talked with old men who remember many such ; but last century, being an age of modernities, was by the same count an age of destruction. There is still at Landscheid, a mile or so north of Brandenbourg, a house displaying over its entry the date 1190. Its size, the thickness of its walls, and the name it still bears in the village—*Junkesch*—argue it the dwelling of a *Juncker* (compare our slangy but quite classical “Younker”) or cadet of the Counts of Vianden, the owners of Landscheid in the twelfth century. Houses there were ; houses neither castle-sheltered nor fortified, but built square in monastic fashion for safety, so that dwelling, stables, barns and cattle-sheds enclosed a central quadrangle with fewest possible openings. In such houses, held sometimes in feoffage under a feudal superior, dwelt large families numbering lusty males who could well hold the place against a mere band of freebooters. The occupants of the messuage would be people of fair means, perhaps of noble birth. The house was always a low construction, of one story or two at most, thick-walled, with narrow, barred windows ; slate-roofed, if in a schistous region ; but oftenest covered with broom or thatch. Lime, coming from a distance, was costly in

these parts, so the stones of the walls were joined with clay; but the walls were limed on the outside to protect the inner part from damp. The roof-thatch, being easily inflammable, was laid upon a solid bed of limed clay.

Let us enter the house, if we can persuade the inmates that we are not spies or filibusters. The mighty door, a thing of massive oak-beams covered with great iron-headed nails to baffle the marauding axe, swings back grinding upon its hinges, and we find ourselves in the kitchen. This is the parlour, and a vast place it is; solidly stone-vaulted, with a chimney-place the size of a modern cottage-room. In the smoke hang enormous quarters of salted meat, beef and pork, to which the blue curling fumes of the juniper-logs are imparting at once an aromatic flavour and a practical incorruptibility. The hearth—and what a hearth! it is an altar—is flanked by giant fire-dogs, of forged iron, or of redly-glowing copper if mine host be rich. On the fire stout logs are sending up a hundred lambent tongues of flame; tree-trunks, some more than a foot in diameter, thrown intact across the andirons! one end blazes crackling in the fire, the other gave you a bump at the door when you came in; as it burns away, they heave it along the dogs firewards. That is a fire! we of to-day scarcely know what a fire is, shivering over our little jerry-built grates whose ironic kinkings just serve to help us realise the cold; they cannot even crackle. But this great log—they must keep an eye on it, or its fall might fire the rushes on the floor. Above the hearth from a hinged bracket there hangs an iron chain; from rings in this chain, at various heights, are suspended the metal pots and pans which contain the food to be cooked for man and beast. The kitchen-floor is of beaten clay; if means admit, it is a mosaic of flagstones. The cattle-stalls open through a door into the kitchen, or, as is still found in some parts of northern Germany, there is no door; thus

the master can watch, feed and tend his beasts without going outside the house. It is an advantage if, as is often the case, human wolves wait without. Around the kitchen are the sleeping-apartments, if such there be, and store-rooms for food and other necessities ; if there be a second story, these are above. Of all this, as usual, Rome is at the base. The house, a kitchen-parlour-nucleus set round with clustering chambers, is but an uncouth resurrection of the villa with its cool tessellated atrium, its erotic frescoes, and its fountain tinkling in the midst.

Now reduce your house to a small and somewhat miserable scale, and you have the dwelling of the vassal family under the mountain's lee. The château reaches down father-like and throws its protecting arms about the hamlet, the fortifications running out into thick walls which encircle the family of little tenements in a large embrace ; they seem to nestle as near as possible to their protector—a strange comment upon “feudal tyranny” ; some of them are built into quarried niches of the lordly rock. They shrink, these cabins, as though to tell the foe they are not worth his trouble ; they huddle together, as though for common wardship. Most of those who have visited Brandenbourg have noticed but one curve of houses round the precipitous hill's base. One in ten, who may have looked more closely, has espied a network of little alleys behind, with a second row of tiny cottages in the hollows of the steep. The air is moist and febrile ; think of this, and of the long entail of cousin-marriages—and the feudal heritage of ills, the scrofula and rickets and the rest, are not wondrous.

Invoke, then, once more the wings of fancy, and choose for your Hegira one of those long winter evenings when cold and dark bade holiday from labour in the fields. The rich man has a fire in kitchen, armoury, knights' hall ; the chimney-places are gems of carving and chisellery, where

from joist and mantel proudly gleams the blazonry of his race. But in the poor man's demesne, save in the kitchen, hearth is none. Around the modest but cosy blaze the serf-family is grouped. The women ply the distaff, spinning the wool and hemp and flax which summer toil has gathered and prepared. That is the grandfather who fills the place of honour near the fire, a wooden seat with a great back to it, still met with to-day in the country, and called *Siddel*. It seems strange to see him without a pipe, but even Fancy's magic cannot put anachronism into his mouth, seeing that the noble savage is still revelling in the monopoly of that censer of comfort. Instead of smoke there issues from his lips many a doughty history of prowess, legend of saint-lore, ghost-tale, or narrative of the adventures of his youth when he followed his liege to Holy Land upon the sacred Quest. It is good to be there by the lurid flicker, watching the reminiscent blue eye that glitters from that rugged old face, and starting at the shadows when the story shudders into borderland. Meanwhile the boys are not idle; they are mending wheels, they are at some carpenter's task, they are plaiting straw or osier into those strange baskets like Roman urns, in which wheat and beans and lentils are stored. If the firelight fail, there are long shavings of fir and willow, dried in the oven; a boy leaps up, lights one of these, and fixes it in a spring-bar clamped to the wall; when, every five minutes, it burns away, it is replaced.

Suddenly a confused clangour resounds from the manorial belfry; it is the Curfew, announcing bedtime. The whole little world is changed at once. The tale, leaving the Saracen with uplifted scimitar or the ghost unladen, stops dead; spindle and adze and bill-hook are put aside; and standing with bowed heads the entire family join in a simple, sing-song prayer to God the Crucified and His

Mother that cares for the poor. Someone scatters over the glowing logs a handful of cold ashes, "covering" the fire ; and all are soon healthily asleep upon their beds—which are sacks full of oat-husks with sheepskins for covering—to rise, long before the dawn, fresh for the hard toils and hourly perils of another day.

Industry, in these villages, was domestic. Every family produced its modest necessities. Commerce, the roads being few and dangerous, was yet in its infancy. Certain essentials of life, such as salt, not indigenous here, must be brought from other countries ; and silk, tapestry, fine-woven cloth, spices and other luxuries must come for the nobility under escort from Venice and the flourishing manufactories of Flanders and Brabant, as the modern local surnames, Flammang and Brabender, testify. For the villagers, such commerce as existed was carried on with the neighbouring cities of Trèves and Metz, by the connecting rivers, Moselle and Sûre. For this purpose fairs were instituted by the Counts on certain days, and the merchants who brought their bales from those cities were accorded numerous privileges. Many of these "Kermesses" are still kept religiously. The merchants would be paid in kind, in cattle and produce ; the beasts were a cheap merchandise, for they transported themselves ; and in timber from the vast forests, from whose ashes potash could be extracted. As to carriage of goods, it took place on man-back, mule-back, ass-back ; or a primitive cart lumbered along on a roadless soil ; when ruts became prohibitive, no one took the trouble to fill them up ; the next cart would improvise another road for itself alongside. Thus these "roads" were often hundreds of yards wide. Owing to the great difficulty of exchange it would often happen that one canton of the country might be decimated with famine, while in another, not ten

leagues off, the very pigs were dyspeptic through high living.

All the simple things of daily life the peasants made for themselves. In a cellar, called *Webekammer*, or Weaver's Room, was kept a rough wooden loom ; upon this the flax, hemp, and wool, spun by the women, was woven by an itinerant weaver who would make his rounds for that purpose ; then the material was transformed by the housewife into body-linen, bedding, or clothes ; these latter were often of mixed material and colour, called *tiretaine*, or *tirtech* (tartan). Or sometimes the village tailor, going from house to house, would do the work for his food and a few trifling coins. Soap, too, was compounded, of soaked ashes, salt, and fat ; its use was moderate. Each household made bread in great quantity at a time, about monthly ; or it was baked in a common oven, rented from the Seigneur. The many streams were turned to account for the grinding of the corn, each village having its mill, for whose compulsory use the subject must pay rent to his lord. Beer was brewed ; wine, where heaven and earth allowed, was distilled ; it was the sort of wine which in certain parts of northern Germany they call *Dreimännerwein*, because it takes three men to drink it—one to hold the patient while another pours the beverage down him. The only village tradesmen, properly so called, were the carpenter, the farrier, and the wheelwright, all three indispensable alike to the armed knight and the humble son of toil. Vegetable culture differed widely from that of to-day. The insecurity of life and property forbade the tilling of the soil save within a small radius around the village ; the plough was but a rough curved tree-bough with an iron point.

In these narrow huddled fields you would see no clover, no beet-root, mangel, lucerne, turnip, parsnip, salsify, as now ; the all-paramount potato awaited Columbus in

American wilds ; buckwheat came to Europe only after the last Crusades. The three years' rotation of Charlemagne's time, rye, oats, fallow-ground, obtained. Onion, leek, and garlic, beans and peas, grew in the little gardens ; lentils, the potato's predecessors, were almost the staple food. These vegetables could be preserved in the dry state for any length of time, a most important consideration when sieges might last for years. Hemp and flax were largely grown, cotton and silk were yet to come. In a corner of the garden was the medicinal department, camomile, peppermint, balm-mint, absinthe, mallow. "*Cur moriatur homo, cui salvia crescit in horto ?*" Outside the little zone of village cultivation reigned solitary leagues of broom, so tall that a man on horseback might hide in it. Here was pasturage for the cattle, which the children watched all night in the open air, building huts of branches for themselves and lighting fire in them. At times beasts would stray, become the prey of wolves and cattle-stealers ; the laws against these latter were draconian in their severity, for the flocks were the peasant's life ; often death was the penalty. Whole forests were granted to a village by the Seigneur, the villagers being allowed to cut wood at will for fires and building ; for scarcely any marketable value was set on wood as a combustible until the seventeenth century brought blast-furnaces. The forests being used as pig-pastures for the acorns and beech-nuts, their extent was measured by the number of porkers they were capable of entertaining. Thus, in a document of the year 926, published by Hontheim, in which one Bernacrus makes grant of his domain of Radinga or Redingen to the Abbey of St. Maximin at Trèves : "ET EGO ACCEPI AB ILLIS IN PAGO ALSACENSI IN COMITATU MELIGOWINSE IN VILLA COGNOMINATA *Wismaris ecclesia* MANSUS XX ECCLESIAM CUM CURTA ET CASA DOMINICATA ET MANSA INDOMINICATA C QUI RECIPIT SEMENTIS

MODIOS LX ET SYLVA IN QUA *saginari* POSSINT PORCI CCC ET MOLENDINA VI CUM MANCIPIIS", etc. But these immense forests pastured brutes less tractable than pig—stag, roebuck, wolf, bear, lynx ; buffalo and elk too, if we may draw inference from village-names. Jealous therefore was the severity with which the nobles guarded the rights of the chase. The common folk were cordially welcome to the acorns ; but you will scarce find, among the many charters of franchise, any hunting-licence granted to bourgeoisie or provostry.

Man was robust ; the natural selection involved in a rude and simple life of labour and danger forbade him to be otherwise : for who could survive but the fittest ? Yet of these, too, must wounds and maladies take toll. To whom, then, must they go for tending ? There were no doctors. At the end of the seventeenth century there was but one doctor to be found in the whole country, and he was a diplomate of Louvain come to Luxembourg for change of air. It was but late in Europe's day that the medical profession became differentiated from the ecclesiastical. One of the earliest Christian schools of medicine, possibly the first, was at Monte Cassino, that cradle of the Benedictine order ; then came the school of Salerno, known for its ponderous prescriptions in hexameters ; then the Montpellier faculty in southern France, which, as we saw, relieved Count John of his short-sightedness by blinding him. These brilliant scientific luminaries were confined to the south of Europe ; Germany was long left in darkness—no unmixed evil for Germany. The only medicine-men in Lotharingian regions who could make any pretence to orthodoxy were the Benedictine monks of Echternach. From early eighth-century a hospital had existed in the monastery. A certain medical tradition was kept up there, but difficulty of communication rendered it almost inaccessible to any but rich and noble patients ; a disability of which, as the authorities consulted

by the good monks were Hippocrates and Galen, the poor had little reason to complain. They were much better off in the hands of the Curé and the lady of the manor, who often devoted themselves most charitably to the care of the sick serfs, and whose "old-wives' remedies" were probably a good deal more practical than the semi-incantations of the churchmen. Common-sense is Æsculapius' best drug, and a little love is better than all the boluses in the world. Of medical barbers, blood-letters, and cupping-glass quacks there were plenty.

A notion of the surgical methods may be formed from the treatment applied by the famous Ambrose Paré to the great Duke of Guise, when the latter had been wounded under the eye by an arrow. In order to get a purchase for the extraction of the arrow-head, this doctor planted his foot on the patient's face. Amputation was a drastic business; the flesh was cut, the bone rapidly sawn asunder, and the bleeding stump steeped in boiling oil or molten pitch to stop the bleeding by closure of the blood-vessels. Curiously enough there were iron constitutions which survived these tender operations. Comparative pathology was a fruitful source of experience, as it is to-day; but in a somewhat different sense, for a village farrier reputed successful in the cure of cattle-disease would be resorted to by his fellow-townsmen, to whom he would apply the same methods. These analogical practitioners often enjoyed a great local reputation, and are even now quite frequently to be met with. A hundred different herbs and roots were credited with all-curative properties, and sorcerers galore, both male and female, carried on the trade of their Druidic ancestors. For every malady there was an antidotic Saint; ox, cow, sheep, pig, had each its celestial leech; often a punning application of the saint's name determined the allotment. All this flourishes still. But the sovereign panacea was a commodity

regarded by many later children—when innocent of brimstone—as anything but physic. I refer to Treacle. Nero's physician, Andromachus of Crete, invented it. He said it ought to have 240 ingredients, but I sadly fear the mediæval Katerfelto too often put a confiding public off with an inferior article containing a mere hundred or so. Opium was the bulk of it. It was hawked about the villages by pedlars called Dreiockelskrämer, who were still to be seen fifty years ago. Doubtless every one of these nostrums and devotions had its use as a faith-healer, by suggesting recovery. There are no closer mates than mind and body.

That education, such as it was, lay in monastic hands is a truism. We have seen how good Countess Ermesinde placed the schools, which her father had founded, under the direction of the abbeys of Munster and St. Hubert. They were practically seminaries for intending clergy. None but the clerics had any knowledge of letters whatever; and in the case of many of the secular priests one may conjecture that a modicum of theology, with some canine Latin, formed the sum of their attainments. The art of writing represented a standard of erudition somewhere about the modern level of Sanskrit or the Differential Calculus. The nobility prided themselves on their innocence of all lore whatsoever. A chevalier signed documents by stamping them with a crest on his armour; if he had no seal, a relation or friend did it for him. As to the mass of the people, they knew rather less than their cattle. Christianity was universal, but its preachers had deliberately grafted it upon paganism, whose superstitions survived in a Christian dress. The old Teutonic nature-worship showed its outline plainly through the thin veil. Baldur and Freya, in haloes, looked quite civilised. If a saint's name sounded like the name of a deity, the former took over the latter's functions. Thus Iul became Noel, St. John's Day perpetuated the German ritual of the

summer solstice, and Thor or Donar, the god of thunder, became a saintly lightning-conductor as St. Donatus. So with a strange conservatism this northern brood took a reversionary leap over the disgusting Roman god-mob and lighted on the cold grand rock whence it was hewn—a harking-back half-conscious but wholly and nobly leal. Gibes, and doubt that the prayer was heard, I leave to the severer sort of Christian. It is well for most of us that Heaven is wider than man's mind and warmer than his heart.

But those monks were mighty overmuch. There was an "Erastian Establishment" in every borough, for village "livings" were by right in the Seigneur's gift; but by dint of successive donations—some of which were dictated by the wolf who seems to have taken up chronic quarters at manorial doors, and others by that noble distaste for a bothersome responsibility which survives in some modern English patrons—the monasteries got control of the presentation in most of the parishes. The result was monastic absorption of revenue, leaving the poor secular at pains to keep body and soul together. This latter—often, in earlier times, a married man with a family—was thus reduced to dependence upon the goodwill of his flock, which we may be sure was not irresponsible; for these poor sheep knew suffering and were kind. Hence the dues to the priest of soil's and herd's produce, which in some Luxembourgish villages obtains to this day. It was the old feud between Martha and Mary, with a strange inversion; for the devotees of the contemplative life were extremely active in the art of acquisition, while the active contingent were left to contemplate ruin—which must frequently have stared them in the face. The fact was that the higher clergy were of noble rank. The offices of bishop, abbot, and prior went as an appanage to the younger sons of the aristocracy. In the lists of dignitaries we constantly meet the names of noble

families neighbouring upon the see or abbey. Often a certain bishopric would be recruited for generations from a family, passing from uncle to nephew, the cadets being educated with a view to the family mitre. And indeed the superior clergy were scarcely distinguishable from the nobility. They coveted, they loved, they jousted, they hunted, they did business, they did battle, they accommodated gentlemen in temporary pecuniary straits.

The administration of justice was complicated exceedingly. Three legal spheres are conspicuous : High, Middle, and Low Justice. The first related to crimes which could entail corporal punishment, and was vested in the hands of the sovereign power of the country or seigneurie, civil or ecclesiastical as the case might be. Such crimes were murder, homicide, theft, treason, sorcery, heresy, wounding and assault. Middle Justice had to do with civil cases such as debts, pledges, and other litigations ; while Low Justice regulated land-property and rents, and was in the hands of the Seigneur Terrien or lord of the soil. All three were evolutions from one original jurisdiction, administered supremely by a single conquering hand, and separated in course of time through bequest and sale and pledge, so that it came to be possible for the three spheres of justice to belong, in one domain, to three different powers or persons. Add to this that one village was frequently shared between four or five different seigneurs, and imagine the complications of the machinery to be set in motion before any poor devil could hope to get redress. Over-regulation, not primitive simplicity, was the curse of ancient justice. The clergy, being the sole writers, generally discharged the office of notary. Annual assizes, generally three (after Epiphany, Quasimodo, and St. John), were held by échevins or Schöffen, at which the Seigneur's chaplain was clerk. Acts, until the fourteenth century, were mostly drawn up in

Latin ; then German appears ; after the Burgundian conquest French becomes the administrative tongue, and continues to-day. Capital punishment, for nobles, was death by the sword ; for commoners, the gibbet. This latter was set up in a conspicuous spot, which can be still traced by the frequent place-name of Galgenberg. The body was left hanging until another replaced it.

The bumbledom of legality is well reflected in a certain ancient fête, fully sanctioned by the authorities, which survived in this region to a much later time. It was called the *Amecht*. An association of the unmarried young men of the village, called the *Amechtbrueder*, or Brethren of the Amecht, would meet on the six Saturday evenings before the fête and elect the following functionaries ; whose names parodied offices of the day.

The Lord High Justice.

The Seven Sheriffs.

The Registrar.

The Purveyor of Wind.

The Wiper of Dew.

The Assayer of Pears.

The Miller.

The Astrologer.

The Executioner with his Two Assistants.

The Provost-at-Arms and his Two Assistants.

The Barber and his Two Assistants.

The Seven Runners.

The Grinder and his Two Assistants.

The Three Hussars.

The Apparitor.

Two Standard-Bearers.

Two Huntsmen.

The Clown.

The Poet.

On the Sunday of the fête, which was the village Kermesse, a dummy stuffed with straw was drawn along on a car with nine wheels. This unhappy effigy having been accused and found guilty of certain impossible crimes of which his advocates could not clear him, was condemned, beheaded, and burned with great pomp. Then followed the merry-making. The Amecht occupied itself, during its six sessions, with the morality of the village generally; tried cases connected with the protection of the crops, the religious duties of its members, and the relations of the sexes. The fines exacted in penalties went to defray expenses. It is not hard to fancy the mischievous personalities, the flirtations ruthlessly dragged to light, the blushes of man and maiden, and the uproarious hilarity that must have attended this lively Game of Forfeits.

The strange rite was no doubt a relic of the worship of the Scandinavian Holda, the German Ceres or Earth-Goddess. A serious vein, too, ran through the foolery; many of the cases tried were real, and the justice administered was often probably a good deal more equitable than that dispensed by bishop or baron—which latter's lacking measures it was partly intended to fill. The name is serious enough: Amecht, Old German *ambacht*, judicial power. For the rest, it bore to justice the same parodic relation as did the Mystery-play to religion. The humorous sense of early Christian Europe was of high development. The parodists revered the things they ridiculed. These concessions to the eternal Baby in every grown-up heart formed a healthy safety-valve, preventive of revolutions. Man, dressed in a little brief authority, is never so savage but he has a shrewd glimmering of the quaint fatuity of all earthly pomp, the sardonic contrast of gay dress with grim death, of official oligarchy with the democracy of the grave. Nay, the child-race sees the most clearly. Adult communi-

ties lose the second-sight that waits on fun. Grown-up people never play church. Only the reverent spiritual interest of a child could see the humour of it.

The money of the period offers a field of study too involved to interest the ordinary mind. The right of coinage, as bringing both gain and glory, formed one of the main objects of feudal ambition, though mintage as an art had slept with the Roman Empire. The tearing-up of the imperial purple among Charlemagne's feeble successors had resulted in currencies innumerable. Every little county and barony had its own coinage, weights and measures; and as promiscuous hostility was the order of the day, each standard was valueless beyond its own frontier—which, combined with the endless internal variability of types in each state, perplexed commerce hideously and opened an unlimited field to sharp practice. Tenth-century emperors of Germany began to think no more of granting coinage-rights to powerful dukes and palatines than does a modern English sovereign of knighting a tea-dealer. But the great coiners of the day were the Churchmen. The three Othos, in that century, granted no less than twenty such concessions to archbishops, bishops, and abbots. It is curious to watch these grants to the Church thicken at the approach of the year 1000 A.D., when religious people everywhere expected the close of the millennium and the end of the world. In high civil quarters it was judged well to be in good odour with Heaven's stewards at such a time. In 992 our Abbey of Echternach came in for such a grant. Most of the Counts and Dukes of Luxembourg had a mint; but their coins are rare at this day: about 330 types have been classified. John seems to have struck the most, as might be expected. In order to meet in some degree the fearsome complications, this Count, as also some others, coined Social Moneys so called, having joint

currency in other States, which points to a glimmering of political economy. The earlier money is thin, small, and light. Precious metals grew scarcer every century. Spain was the ancient mine of Europe, but it was exhausted ; the auriferous rivers of Asia Minor were in Saracen hands ; the dearth reached apex just in time for the rich lodes of the New World. Silver was the ordinary currency, and its caratage varied with the honesty of the potentate whose image it bore. I regret to say, with all allowance for his affliction, that much of the money of John the Blind which has come to light is very base indeed in relation to its surface-value ; and as to Elizabeth of Goerlitz, that lady emerges as a professional forger. In view of the local fecklessness and of the Counts' family relations with France, much of the money was struck by French artists. Their ignorance of German shows quaintly in their torture of proper names. A famous coin reads *Vellis Fellis*, which puzzled numismatists until an expert came upon the scene. He deciphered it as *Welsche Fels*, Laroche in Ardenne ; the other Fels or Larochette being in the German quarter of the county.

À propos, a word on names. Mid-fifteenth-century, our present point of arrival, marks broadly the evolution of the surname. Before that, as a constant quantity, it was scarcely known ; nor did it become a fixed system until civil registration, introduced in 1789, became universal in modern central Europe. This census makes subsequent genealogic research an easy matter. In olden days it was otherwise. The lineage even of noble personages is often extremely hard to trace. With the gentle of the Middle Age it was as with old Adam's self ; as he was titled after his estate, the whole earth, so they drew their several names from the slices of the earth to which they had helped themselves. Modern man, taking a desirable suburban residence, dubs it "The Elms" or "Sunnyside", himself remains John

Smith or Henry Wilkins ; feudal man, taking a mountain, styled himself after it, became Gilles de Bourscheid, or Giselbert of Houffalize. The fiefs or estates, at first personal, in course of time became hereditary ; then the local name fared likewise. If a younger son, by marriage or legacy or sword, acquired a new fief, he took its name ; thus Wenceslas I., youngest son of John of Bohemia, became father of the great imperial family of Luxembourg-Limbourg.

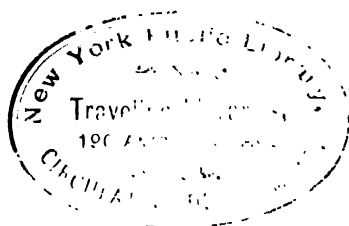
All that is matter of common knowledge. But a stranger matter is that with common folk it was the same—they were styled after their houses. Records of justice and registers of fiefs for centuries show us that a serf's house always kept the same name, occupy it who might ; and gave its name to each new tenant. We can understand “John de Beaufort” or “Jones of Trinity” ; but that John Smith, taking Sunnyside on a seven years' lease, should become John Smith Sunnyside just because his predecessor in that charming villa saw fit so to name it, would strike us as odd. The house generally remained in the hands of the same family ; but the latter might grow extinct, or be turned out by their lord ; in that case the new tenants took the old name. The tenacity of these house-names was such, that old village-houses here have to this day the names they bore in the registers of the sixteenth century. In a few rare cases the name of the family coincides with that of the house. The house-name lives on the lips of the people, so that if you want to find a person you sometimes have considerable trouble if you know his name only. You must know the name of his house too. That will sometimes be derived from the first occupant of the house, as *Hansen* ; sometimes from his trade, as *Schmitz* ; sometimes from some feature of construction, as *Kieschten*.

As for Christian names, we all know that they spring

from the custom of placing candidates for baptism under the protection of some saint, bishop, confessor, or martyr, whose name accordingly they received. When the Faith was commencing its struggles with paganism, without doubt the clergy kept careful lists of their proselytes; hence baptismal registers. But when Ecclesia Militans became Ecclesia Triumphans, she had no further need to number her forces, and the registers fell into desuetude. The Council of Trent ordered their renewal, but its dictates were largely neglected, so that big gaps baffle the searcher who would climb, by this precarious way, the ladder of ages. Yet the christening-books have been a great source of surnames, for all that. The many German or Latin surnames formed from Christian names—as Hary Petri, Lorenz Friedrichs, Jehan Conradi, Justen Ambrosy, Eltz Stephani, and others, all still in vogue—are a genitival development of the Christian name of the parent, the record running “*anno . . . mense . . . die . . . baptizatus est N.N. “filius seu filia N.N.”*” We ourselves have many such baptismal possessives turned into surnames: Andrews, Peters, Roberts, Matthews. To this day many Luxembourgish names are pure Latin, as Molitor, Sutor, Vitri, Mercatoris, Auri Faber, Textor, Morbus. The ordinary evolution of surnames was on this wise. No one had any but a baptismal name; in order, therefore, to distinguish an individual, the name of his trade, or of his village, or of some personal mark, not always flattering, was clapt on to his Christian name. Generally the more dignified this sobriquet, the more quizzing the spirit in which it was bestowed, as in the case of Burggraff, Prinz, Kayser, Koenig, Bischof, Probst. Thus what our ancestors originated humorously, we adopt seriously; while those things which they revered and cherished as the life itself, we laugh to scorn. The mocking title over dying human great-

ness survives it. The Muse of History is a sardonic jade. Absurd we are, and to absurdity we must return.

On the whole the Middle Age has left scantier traces here than has the Roman. Rome was wiped off the German map by cataclysm ; feudality died, here as elsewhere, of a slow decline. The sword cut off the one ; thought killed the other. It is less the Sansculottes than Luther and the press that have pushed aside the mailed glove and the crosier. This goes to explain the survival, by the ancient, of the recent. Chivalry has left few more legible souvenirs than a melancholy broken fortress on every hill—Time's monotonous mockery of Europe's *Flegeljahre*, as the Germans call it, her hobbledehoy-age. But Rome, crystallised for all time by a barbarian lava-flood, still, in a thousand warm human eloquencies, speaks from the soil. Her tombs, her tessellations, her baths, her monuments, her camps, her altars, serve well-nigh for milestones ; her roads enmesh the land ; her soft language weds with rugged Teuton in the names of people and of places ; houses are built upon her stones, her substructures lurk in the fields, her coins have been voted a nuisance, they blunt the plough. But the household gods and goods of knight and baron and bishop have fallen between two fates ; if precious, they have fed rapacity—what the Thirty Years' War may have overlooked was scavenged a century and a half later by Republican land-sharks ; if merely useful, they have been worn out and replaced by "modern comforts". The land, forgetful of its youth, remembers its childhood.





CAVES OF THE GOLDFRALEY

[To face p. 85]

CHAPTER IV

TRODDEN UNDERFOOT OF THE NATIONS

LET us round off now, and somewhat lightly, our life-sketch of the land. The humorous and tender spell of antiquity is snapt, for we have reached the days of Protestantism, printing, and Columbus. The country from this moment loses much of its engaging individuality ; it has no longer sovereigns of its own, but slips into a vast whole, whose destinies it partakes. Philip of Burgundy forges himself like an iron link between the dear Dark Ages and the dim beginnings of Renaissance. The fine old feudatory families are dying out, many of the massy manors have changed masters, and the art of prowess has become explosive. The proud little land is to be trodden underfoot of the nations, and all that gay sordidness and light-hearted bubbling treachery, which make the ages of chivalry so charming, are to be washed away in one dull scarlet sea. The sparkle of flowers is gone, we come out of the meadow, let us pick our way as rapidly as we can through the marsh.

We—as doctors used to say—are now a Burgundian possession ; as such we pass into the hands of the house of Austria. Philip the Good never took the title “Duke of Luxembourg”. His son, famous Charles the Bold,

bought up the title from Casimir King of Poland (who had married Emperor Sigismund's grand-daughter), strengthened the fortress, restored certain privileges, affiliated the state to the great Mechlin council, carried on long struggles with Lorraine and France which bathed the province in blood, married Margaret the sister of English Edward IV., and left one child only by a former wife. The child was Mary of Burgundy. With his fall, last of great vassals stronger than their masters, began the march of the French kings to glory and shame. From this moment, the eighth decade of the fifteenth century, France begins to cast lustful eyes upon the stalwart fort which every generation was clothing with virile might and strategic importance hardly less than European. This French envy, with the warfare bred of it, formed the chiefest and darkest factor in Luxembourg's subsequent story. Marie of Burgundy (who lies at Bruges with her father) brought the Duchy to the Austrian house by her marriage with Archduke Maximilian. Womanfully the young bride of twenty-one stood up to Louis XI., grim wooer of Luxembourg capital; she crowned its looming fortress with eleven towers and a bastion, which latter was called Marie, and bade thence, from cannon-mouth, defiance to the French, who had made a breach, but were routed with a loss of seven hundred. Soon after, the two young sovereigns came to the city in state, received its homage, and graciously returned it the seal and privileges confiscated by Philip the Good. It was a pity when plucky Archduchess Mary met with that fatal hunting-accident.

Maximilian succeeding to Empire, the dependency fell with the other Netherlands and Burgundy to his son Philip the Fair, during whose reign it suffered horrors at French hands. Philip's wife Jeanne of Arragon and Castile presented him in 1500 with a son who received, with the name of Charles, the title Duke of Luxembourg. This was the

illustrious Emperor Charles V. The title meant the pointed determination to keep the Duchy in Burgundian hands, as against the unceasing avidity of France. During Charles' minority, after his father's early death, his good aunt Margaret of Savoy administered the "Netherlands". She had the sense to ally herself with England against the common foe, with the result of the "Day of Spurs", a great French defeat, 30,000 Englishmen assisting. The Treaty of London, in 1514, followed, restoring brief respite of peace to Europe. Five years afterwards Charles, Sovereign of the Netherlands, King of Spain and the "West Indies"—America, that is, then twenty-five years discovered—succeeded his grandfather as Emperor of Germany. Through Austro-Burgundio-German father and Spanish mother all rays of world-power converged upon his head. His vast dominions surpassed the Roman Empire at its greatest; upon them, he vaunted pardonably, the sun never set. In the twenty-fifth year of his reign, at Margaret's death, he gave the Netherland regency to his sister Queen Mary of Hungary, who kept it until his abdication. It needed a regent, for Charles was a confirmed globe-trotter; boasting nine journeys into, or in, Germany, seven to Italy, six to Spain, ten to the United Provinces, four to France, two to England, and two to Africa. It was under his sway that the Duchy came definitely to form one of the "Seventeen United States of the Low Countries", thus fulfilling the old dream of the house of Valois. This Dominion was vested in one sovereign hand, but each Province kept its own particular laws, customs, and privileges, with a local Council sending its representatives to the central Government at Brussels. Charles modified Philip's administering arrangements at Luxembourg, establishing a Provincial Council there. To this there was appeal from the decisions of the local justices, seigneurs, and échevins; from it, to the

sovereign Council at Mechlin. Hence the still common proverb, when a question is to be settled, *et geht op Mecheln*, it goes to Mechlin. An edict of Charles, published in the same year (1531), throws a somewhat roseate light on the spirit of the times. I abridge its articles.

(1) The ordinances against Protestants, now republished, are to be put in force with all possible rigour.

(2) No one may be a notary, save he be of spotless reputation, and after examination of his capacities had by the Provincial Council.

(3) Cornerers of provisions, who manœuvre artificial rises in prices, are to be exiled with confiscation.

(4) Such prices are to be fixed by the magistrates of every town.

(5) Bankrupts are to be treated as public thieves ; if they leave the country they are to be held exiled.

(6) Vagabonds and beggars are to be punished ; the genuine poor are to be assisted by relieving-officers ; the sick and crippled are to be received into hospitals.

(7) To check debauch at kermesses, they shall not exceed one day, which the Provincial Council shall appoint ; offenders to be fined thirty livres paris.

(8) Wedding celebrations must be confined to twenty guests, all relatives, and must not continue after dinner on the morrow ; penalty, twenty carolus.

(9) Christening-presents may not be offered or accepted by sponsors or parents, save for charity's sake in case of the poor.

(10) All inns in lonely places far from the king's highway are strictly forbidden, under pain of twenty carolus ; fine for lodging or drinking in such inns, six carolus.

(11) Any judge or échevin found drunk shall be deprived.

(12) Blasphemy of God, the Blessed Virgin, or the

Saints, shall be punished with a month's imprisonment on bread and water; hardened offenders shall have their tongues pierced in the public square.

(13) Garments of cloth of gold or silver forbidden; those of crimson velvet allowed only to princes, margraves, counts, knights of the Golden Fleece, knights bannerets, presidents of Privy Council and officers of the Imperial Household; beside these persons, he only who keeps three good saddle-horses may wear black velvet, and he who keeps two, damask. Penalty, confiscation of clothes in question.

Charles' wars with France cost the province dear. It formed a cockpit for the *odium theologicum* between his Most Catholic sword and the principalities and powers of the Wittenberg monk, which were mustering their unseen and seen array all over central Europe. For all this, in sackings and burnings by Germans and French, the poor paid one long current bill; what was left, one fateful series of fires and plagues engulfed. Under the watchful Imperial eye the fortifications approached still nearer to impregnability; nevertheless the Dukes of Orleans and Guise, at head of 28,000 men, took the city and occupied nearly the whole country, Francis I. coming in person to visit his new conquest and add to the works of defence. But the Imperial forces wrested it from the French, and their subsequent efforts to retain it were baffled for a hundred and forty years. I may mention that it was to a Seigneur of Clervaux, the Count of Lannoy, that King Francis, captured at Pavia a score of years before, gave up his sword.

Charles disappeared from the scene as theatrically as he had done everything else. His brilliant and dramatic abdication at Brussels, with its bathos of tears from those United Provinces which he had systematically treated as a fair field for extortion and religious persecution, is notorious. Leave

the great *poseur* to consecrate among his clocks and his Estremadura sausages the dregs of an outworn life in his Yuste cloister, and glance at that cold overbearing Pharisee, his son Philip II., Duke of Brabant and Luxembourg, Count of Flanders, Namur, and Zutphen, Marquis of Antwerp, Seigneur of Mechlin and Utrecht, and so on through all the seventeen fine principalities which, marching at the head of Europe in commerce, industry, science and art, detested to a man the irritating bigot whose whole career was one long war against their liberty and independence. The bloody struggle of the Netherlands for liberty against the successive tools of this dark oppressor—the sinister Duke of Alva, the two Louis de Requesens, Don Juan of Austria, Alexander Farnese, the Count of Mansfeld, Archdukes Ernest and Albert of Austria—were destined only to partial success. The evolution of the great Dutch Republic under auspice of William the Silent, that strong shoot of the old House of Vianden, while it brought a mighty nation of sea-sweepers to the birth, split definitely asunder two elements which never had any natural cohesion, and which no subsequent agency has ever succeeded in inducing to cohere.

This antipathy between North and South, between “Holland” and “Belgium” roughly speaking, began early in Philip’s reign to take strong shape; and at the Luxembourg’s very particular expense. For this province, sticking by Hobson’s choice to the royalist cause, incurred the special hatred of the insurgent States. The Count of Mansfeld, whom the Brussels Council threw into prison, was Governor of Luxembourg. It was the city on the Alzette that served Philip as a drill-ground for his German and Spanish soldiers in his campaign against his own Netherlands; it was the Duchy of Luxembourg that furnished him his battle-field against the attacking troops

of French and Dutch, with awful consequences to which the poor country was by now too well inured. Four nations thus raged together at once, and it is hard to say which the people loathed most cordially—the troops of Philip who were saddled upon them, or the invaders. No village population knew what to-morrow might bring forth; whether it was going to be decimated by the Dutch, or given notice to quit because the royalists wanted the place for a cantonment. Whole townships, on hearing they were to be favoured by military selection for review or encampment, would emigrate in a body with wives, children, and effects. It was during this bad time that little Diekirch so manfully repulsed the marauders; that Echternach was pitilessly ravaged and fined; that its Abbé Bertels, the first historian of the country, was carried captive to Nymegen. But happily there was no Inquisition. Luxembourg was one of the few Netherland provinces into which it was never introduced. This, together with the continual presence of Spanish troops, was at once a sign and a source of the utter sterility of the Reformed doctrine in the province. While the country suffered exquisitely, the town was growing yearly in military, diplomatic and social importance, as a centre for the deliberations of wealthy grandees and other lofty personages sleek with the treasures of Mexico and Peru. It was rich Count Mansfeld who built that wonderful castle at Luxembourg, storing therein his great collection of antiquities of the country; nothing of the castle remains but débris, and the precious relics are dispersed among the cabinets of Brussels and Madrid. But the existing Hôtel-de-ville, with its Spanish magnificence, amply witnesses to a period of wealth and prosperity.

It is painful to note that at this time the moral level of the clergy, partly without their fault, was at nadir point.

The Duchy belonged to seven different dioceses ; the provinces of Trèves and Liège, and the Bishops of Namur, Cologne, Metz, Toul and Verdun. That which is everybody's business is nobody's business ; hence these tears. None of the foreign prelates could make visitation of his little corner without authorisation from the King of Spain, which they, proud bigwigs as they were, did not care to seek in the strained political condition of things. Plans for the creation of a Bishopric of Luxembourg, obviously the only cure, were stamped out by the jealousy of the prelatical "blind mouths" around. So the poor country, nominally Catholic, was practically bishopless, and the sacrament of Confirmation became a vanishing quantity.

Here is a story to the point. Someone, who probably wanted the benefice, complained to the Bishop of Liège that the aged Curé of Gouvy, who was more than a centenarian, had gone childish. The Bishop summoned the venerable priest, and tested his wits with the catechism. "How many Sacraments are there ?" asked he. "Six", was the answer. Bidden by the scandalised prelate to enumerate them, he did so, with one omission. "You have forgotten Confirmation", thundered the Bishop. "Pardon me, Monseigneur", replied the brave priest with an air of humility ; "I have lived a century in Gouvy parish, and all the time no Bishop has come to administer that Sacrament, so I thought it was abolished !"

By the same token parochial affairs were unshepherded, the fitness of candidates for benefices was unassured, the clergy secular and regular were left to their own resources. The result was a grievous unbracing of ecclesiastical discipline. Parochial and conventual scandals abounded, priests danced and philandered at fairs, carried on trades, drank and fought among themselves, wallowed in every incontinence, the whole province scandalised for a century by their vice

and their impunity. The Archbishops of Trèves, complained the Provincial Council, refused to hear a word, declined to ask authorisation to visit the province, would neither listen to the council nor be at any expense to hear cases in their court. All they would do was to make an occasional show of haling the offenders and imposing a small fine, which, considered as a tax upon debauches, had less the effect of checking vice than of chartering it, and made the last state worse than the first.

At length, seeing that something must be done, the Metropolitan sent a brace of Jesuits to the town, to convert the clergy. Three years they laboured under great difficulties, but the monks of St. Hubert's Abbey made things so unbearable for them that they were obliged to quit. Then, eleven years later, three Fathers and two Brothers of the Order, all Flemish this time, came and opened a school at Luxembourg under authorisation of King Philip and the Pope. They acquired many livings in the province, out of their school developed a monastery and a college, and their church is now Luxembourg Cathedral. Out of this college, the salvation of religion and the nucleus of education, have issued men distinguished in every branch of learning.

In 1598 Philip II., presentient of a loathsome death whose approach his subjects hailed with the deepest satisfaction, joined the hands of his daughter the Infanta Isabella with those of Archduke Albert of Austria, already viceroy of such Netherlands as were left; of which dominion he endowed them with sovereignty, subject to a clause providing its return to Spain in the event of their death without issue. Accordingly Albert received the homage of the surviving provinces at Brussels that same year. At this function the Luxembourg envoys, after old custom, were placed at the prince's right hand with the high dignitaries of the court, immediately after the Knights of the Golden

Fleece. They took oath in German, standing, and raising one finger; the other representatives raised two. Murmurs arising, the Archduke interposed with some bitterness: "What have you to complain of? You have rebelled against God and your king; the men of Luxembourg have been faithful to both; of *their* loyalty, a glance were warranty enough—for me!" Next year the princely pair were wedded, and soon after made pompous entry into loyal Luxembourg.

The war with the rebel States went on; Albert was beaten by the Dutch at Nieuport; the "royalist" provinces, convened at Brussels, gave him a limp vote of 30,000 florins' subsidy; disgusted, he vowed never to summon the lukewarm Council again. On this occasion the Luxembourg delegates, not to be cozened by his previous compliment, showed their old independent spirit by standing apart and declining to confabulate save on certain terms. The Duchy, urged they, is, as it has ever been, a distinct Principality, enjoying its particular privileges, and having nothing whatever in common with the rest of the Provinces. If there be a question of impost, it must be considered by their own council in their own capital. Should they see fit to vote a subsidy, it must be distinctly understood that there is no precedent. The Archduke having omitted as yet to take oath that he would respect their privileges, they would feel obliged by his doing so at his earliest convenience. The Duchy has been already taxed unwarrantably and intolerably, in contravention of the said privileges and without its States' assent; let His Highness remedy this state of things. These rights and redresses accorded, they will take part in the deliberations, always under reserve of their rights and protest against assimilation.

With all these proud terms the Archduke unreservedly complied, and the Luxembourggeois nobility instantly voted

him the 30,000 florins, which, however, they stipulated were to be employed exclusively in the interests of the Duchy; and obeyed without hesitation his summons to mobilisation in Flanders. Ostend, now the only Flemish town in the power of the northern provinces, was the object of the expedition. Albert, determined to put a stop to the depredations of the Dutch garrison and so wipe out the memory of Nieuport, laid siege to the town; the Archduchess Isabella solemnly vowing not to change her chemise until it (Ostend) should be taken. As this was not achieved for more than three years, the vestment in question had ample time to acquire that dirty pale yellow tinge, known to-day as "Isabella colour". As to our Duchy, its plucky stipulation did not preserve it from a sequel of seven years' extortion and Dutch pillage. Eventually, however, the United Provinces, now figuring as an entirely independent Power, concluded an armistice of twelve years with the Spanish Netherlands, during which the Archducal pair exerted themselves to the utmost to repair the ravages of nearly half-a-century of civil war. In the twelfth and last year of the truce, Albert died childless, the Netherlands reverted to Spain in accordance with Philip's will, Holland, released from the chain of armistice, flew like a dog at her old enemy's throat, and soon the whole howling kennel of Europe was loose in the bloody promiscuous pandemonium of the Thirty Years' War.

It was the most dreadful chapter in the history of the Luxembourg, as may be imagined from the fact that Germany was trodden underfoot by all the soldiery of Europe and drained, as one might say, of her last drop of blood. The forced retreat of the Imperial troops from France, which they had ravaged up to Paris gates, reacted here with horrors inconceivable. The Poles of Coloredo, the Croats of Isolani, camping in winter quarters, vied

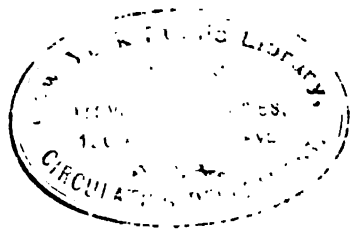
in barbarity towards the poor peasants, squeezing them of the last farthing by revolting tortures. The land lay fallow, whole villages disappeared from the map, plague and famine stalked voracious in man-locust's wake. In 1636 a peck-and-three-quarters of wheat cost the equivalent of nearly two pounds at Arlon; a pound of cheese, eight shillings. Corpses were dug up for food, mothers devoured their children. Foul pestilence besieged Luxembourg, Arlon, Virton, all full of fugitives from the wolfish Poles; a score deaths a day was held a respite; two-thirds of the population was wiped out. Yet all this while Luxembourg was rearing men of mark; abbots, bishops, rectors of universities, scholars, confessors of queens, intimate private secretaries of Kings Philip II. and III. From sufferings, not even the Peace of Munster brought surcease, for France and Spain were to snarl and rend eleven more years; and the Treaty of the Pyrenees came only to subject the Duchy to its first dismemberment in France's favour, docking it of Thionville, Montmédy, Damvilliers, Ivoix, Chavancy and Marville. Through all their miseries the Luxembourgeois were leal and true to the dynasty of Charles V. and the rapidly-declining star of Spain, justifying the graceful things Erycius Puteanus, who appears to have affected the Tacitean style, had said about them in the previous century: "*In rerum tempestate quieti, in obsequio constantes, Deo et regi cari. Stetistis inconcussi, et cum tuti non essetis, tamen securi. Rupes in illis locis vidimus, in pectoribus illis intelleximus. Quati, non moveri, oppugnari, non vinci, vestrum est. Amplius animi, quam montes et rupes valere.*"

With the downward swing of Germany and Spain under flaccid Charles II. and lazy Leopold I., France, in the ambitious person of the Roi-Soleil, kicks the beam of the balance of power. This land-grabbing Louis, while painting the closing decades of the seventeenth century red,

never for an instant loses sight of the redoubtable fortress of our story. Saddled still with unruly Spanish troops—an ill-paid babel of Italians, Spaniards, Walloons, Germans and Croats quartered in the houses of their “protégés” whom they robbed, ravaged, and ravished—and filled from end to end with French treason, fire, and rapine, the Province becomes an Inferno. In 1668, states the Provincial Council’s report, 732 families have sought refuge abroad, and French damage alone totals 79,274 florins. The town is placed under the protection of the Virgin Mary, all Charles’ possessions are committed to St. Joseph’s good offices; but these saintly patrons are clearly overtaken, for things rather grow worse. Marshal Boufflers, commissioned by Louis with an open charter of destruction, goes systematically through the country from castle to castle with shot and shell. Nothing can be imagined more whole-heartedly, conscientiously, impartially thorough, than this house-to-house visitation of Boufflers. As we shall amply see in our later rambles, you cannot take a country walk without encountering the traces of his work. The idea of this round of ruin was that of the old “Lady-bird” rhyme—to sap the garrison of Luxembourg by drawing away the nobility from that coveted fortress to their blazing homes. Feudalism had sickened two centuries before; this was its death and burial. The proud nobility of France had degenerated into king’s satellites, borrowing glory of their Sun’s favour; Louis’ intent was to preach, by cannon-voice, the same lesson elsewhere. At length, in 1684 on the fourth of June, Marshal Créquy, after a siege of five weeks, entered the town, and the dilapidated Spanish garrison went out with military honours.

The French had poured in upon that mighty citadel of stone and iron 37,000 balls and 5,000 bombs; their losses counted eight thousand men. The distracted townsmen,

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who would have welcomed the devil himself if he had brought any kind of discipline with him—for even hell has a Master—were glad to see the great King when he came to visit them three years later, and received him with enthusiasm. After more than a century of sanguinary chaos it was refreshing to have a defined allegiance and a Man at the head of affairs. Here was the beginning of that curious French affinity which, considering old scores, seems misplaced in these Germans. Louis, counting upon permanent enjoyment of his prize, set about developing the fortifications into that bristling masterpiece of impregnability which was the admiration of every true “Uncle Toby” until their saturnine demolition thirty-eight years ago. During his thirteen years’ tenure he fomented the country’s wounds. Privileges won back the fugitives to the deserted towns, French immigrants, whose names survive to-day, filled up the gaps in the decimated population, an enormous outlay upon the fortifications brought back money into the drained exchequer, a certain measure of security began to dawn, and commerce and agriculture were born again. With the other hand Louis put down the Deputation of the States, which latter were allowed to survive—for the purpose of voting subsidies; docked the Provincial Council of its political and administrative rights and made it a mere judicial body subject to the Metz court of appeal; and placed an “intendant” over affairs civil and financial. No definite measures were taken against the nobility, but their independence had, for all that, got its *coup-de-grâce*. Of fifty-seven counts, barons, and seigneurs enrolled, not one single name remains to-day.

But Louis soon found himself confronting four allied adversaries—England, Germany, Spain, and Holland. Nine years this chequered war lasted, and the final Peace of Ryswick, in 1697, wrested the province from his grasp. Out

went Louis, and back came the Spaniards with their abuses. Then Charles II. of Spain died, and the question of succession to the dead and decomposing kingdom kindled the war-torch between France and Austria. (It was during this struggle that England seized the occasion and Gibraltar—that greater Luxembourg of the sea.) While the rivals were trying conclusions a third claimant—as far as the Low Countries went—threw twelve thousand men into the citadel one dark night by a ruse, greatly to the mortification of the Dutch garrison, probably drunk, which the Ryswick terms had stationed there. This intruder was Maximilian Emanuel, Elector of Bavaria ; who supported the title of the Duke of Anjou to Spain on condition that he should receive the sovereignty of the Netherlands. This, on winning his claim, Louis' grandson formally ceded to him. But a document is one thing, and possession is another ; the Elector got possession of Namur and Luxembourg only ; and after three years of partial and ephemeral sway he was forced to retire before the sentence of the Treaty of Utrecht, which, in 1713, placed the Spanish Netherlands in the hands of the House of Hapsburg. Thus our tennis-ball principality, whose evolutions are as bewildering to follow as they must have been distracting to experience, is tossed back for the third time into the hands of Austria ; which, ever kinder than Spain, had in store eighty welcome years of rest.

The Austrian domination carries us into grandfatherly times. Charles VI. taught Luxembourg to lift its defiled head from the dust. A crowd of wise measures, the fringe of modern civilisation, nursed the infant art of civil and domestic life ; regulated currency, drainage, beggars and gipsies, hunting-rights, posting-service, passports, drink-licences and Sunday-opening ; forbade credit to soldiers or loans on their goods, credit of more than a month to officers,

the streets after nine o'clock to students, distillation of spirits from grain, exportation of wood for building ; levied toll on Jews at town-gates ; and permitted the nobility to carry on wholesale commerce without derogation from their dignity. The Duchy is an iron-country, and this last measure conjured up a crop of aristocratic blast-furnaces, some of which may be seen to-day, or their remains, at castle-foot. Charles added his considerable mite, too, to the fortress, which was growing up dynastically like an Egyptian pyramid, and to which every successive master, however diverse from the last, deemed it his duty to contribute.

The Emperor, as we all know, had secured the succession for his daughter by the "Pragmatic Sanction". There had been tall talk at Nymphenburg of partitioning the dominions of the Austrian house, fallen at Charles' death into the feeble hands of a woman. But the woman happened to be Maria Theresa, and the partitioning did not take place. The order, justice, and educational progress which marked her reign bore happy fruit in the Moselle province. Her father's good measures were confirmed, abuses were put down, and curtailment of clerical privileges paved the way for her son's more drastic and less tactful reforms. Real prosperity dawned, witnessed by the gaffer's tale old inhabitants remember hearing at mother's knee, that in "Maria Tessa's" days a peasant would plough with silver share.

Joseph II., a modern Marcus Aurelius, was overfull of zeal for his subjects' welfare. A typic embodiment, destined to fail, of the idea realised five years after his death by the Terror, he preached Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity before ever Sansculotte guns enforced them. Incarnate in him mysterious laws, at point of crisis, tried experiment by fair means ere recourse to foul should be had. One of his

earliest acts was to visit Luxembourg, on which occasion his simple affability won him an affectionate welcome. Wisely or unwisely, or both, he secularised many convents, nipped clericalism in the quick of its pride, quenched serfdom, sent the secular clergy to school, and suppressed the small "orders" in churches and chapels, massing them all into a new "Confraternity of the Active Love of My Neighbour" under "St. Saviour's" protection. The determined attitude of repressiveness towards the clergy and nobility which he maintained throughout the Countries won him the cordial hatred of those naturally conservative bodies. They worked on the municipal self-importance—puffiest of all forms of conceit—of Flanders and Brabant, urging that Joseph was infringing their Magna Charta, the "Joyous Entrance" in which Philip II. had guaranteed their particularism. So he was ; but as they had changed masters five times since then, the weight of this antiquarian appeal seems open to question. Be that as it may, the spirit of revolt took vigorous shape, and drove back the Austrians beyond Marche and St. Hubert. But the Luxembourggeois, always a loyal folk, though they had themselves protested against the new Protestantism, would have none of this meeting, called it derisively *Patriotenrommel*—patriot-hubbub.

Poor Joseph died of disappointment. He had meant to be so useful. He was humane, well-intentioned, and Utopian. The work was near ; but it was written that ruder, redder hands than his were to do it ; and they were already steeped in the awful tincture. A little less reading, with a little more humour, would have made him an Alfred. What man can reach greatness, who always takes himself seriously ?

The first symptom was a flying crowd of French nobility and clergy seeking refuge in Germany from the burst volcano. They made Coblenz their head-quarters, and the

Electeur of Trèves gave them welcome at his court. It was through the province of Luxembourg that they passed; some of them stayed; but not for long. Then the hot breath and resistless flood of the lava-stream came surging after. Under short-lived Leopold II. the Low Countries had returned to their duty. The reign of Francis II. dawned black with war-clouds. The retreat of the invading Prussians after the drawn battle of Valmy resembled the uncorking of a Vesuvius. It was the signal for a French outflow into the Countries, which upon the victory of Jemappes received them open-armed. But loyal Luxembourg remained true to its Austria, and the mad dogs fell a-raging at its frontier-gates. In 1793 and the following year they took Arlon and fired the glorious Abbeys of Orval and Clairefontaine. Then came the tragedy of Dudelange. The people of this frontier-village complained to the French commandant of the ravages of his soldiers; he replied ironically that it was too bad of them, and that next time they had better arrest the marauders and bring them before him. The poor simple yokels took him seriously. When the French troops appeared in the village, their pursuivant was adroitly shot dead. Infuriated, they massacred nearly the whole village—fifty-nine persons, of all ages, including a little girl of five. Fifteen more were made to dig their own graves, and shot, among them an old man of eighty, named Hamilius. In the village church, every seventeenth of May, you may see the catafalque, and hear the mass for their souls.

The victory of Fleurus in Namur province made the invaders masters of the Countries. The Palatinate was overrun, Trèves taken; two thousand pieces of cannon, 60,000 prisoners, and fourteen millions of new subjects, were added to France; the only towns on this side the Rhine that still resisted were Luxembourg and Mayence. The fiery circle

narrowed ever round our province, until Luxembourg itself capitulated on the seventh of June 1795, starved out, after a siege of seven months, during which three hundred horses had been killed for food. All that while the citadel had vainly waited for a relieving force. The garrison of 11,106 had lost but 1,716; the volunteers and peasants had helped dauntlessly. Marshal de Bender, governor of the town, informed the Baron de Boland, captain of the corps of volunteers, that he "should not fail to inform His Majesty their august Sovereign of their disinterested devotion, perseverance, zeal and bravery". The Duchy was annexed to the Republic by act of "the National Convention of the 9th Vendémiaire, the year IV.", under the name of "Department of Forests". A war-tax of a million-and-a-half of francs was levied on the town; the population was only 8,000, and the sum, for the time, meant immensity. But a mason divulging the whereabouts of a secret room he had built in an emigrant's house, a find of an enormous sum reduced the impost; the remainder, by dint of imprisonment of the nine commissioners charged with collection, was quickly extorted.

Then opened a long lease of tribulations for this poor folk, who by now had almost forgotten how to suffer. For nearly a century, fate had left them in peace. There must be some mistake. Accustomed for three generations to bless and venerate the paternal sceptre of the house of Austria, tilling glebe and tending beast in the peaceful service of a home-keeping aristocracy who lived the life of their dependents, unscathed of Luther, fearing God, revering the saints, and regarding their priests as supernally-endowed beings who with a gesture could render them invulnerable or strike them speechless,—it was as though the golden age of Ermesinde had returned. Picture then the inrush of a sudden crew of regicides, blasphemously

howling the equality of all men and writing it in blood and rapine, reasonless idolaters of Reason, exiling their priests, beheading their aristocracy with a new and hellish machine, spitting their blind venom on the very months and days. We shudder to think what the thing must have been to their own compatriots, say, to the peasant of the Morbihan; how much dreader to these strangers! But an occult providence, which works for the last weal of peoples, had decreed. The slough of bondage, however comfortable, must be painfully cast; the travail-pangs of personal liberty, how grievous soever, must be borne. The law of social pathology uses sharp scalpels, which, where the patient is not aware of his canker, seem the sword of a sudden assassin. As when liquids ferment, lees rise to the surface, so in a seething society, big with the future, might is right for the nonce, and madness blindly clokes from itself and its victims its own unconscious purpose. *Quem Deus vult perdere, prius dementat*; and brings out a remnant—the germ of a better future. For presently the tormented must is still, sinks down into a vintage pure and generous; and the present state of the Ardennes—free, and not using the liberty for a cloke of maliciousness—is a precise realisation of the callow dreams of Joseph II.

The feudal rents had been abolished, and the people were become owners, instead of tenants, of their homes. But a fearsome crop of extortions, land-taxes, furniture-taxes, poll-taxes, door-and-window-taxes, succession duties, licences to do everything but breathe, made the old rents seem nugatory. Duties on salt and leather were trebled, taxes on coffee, sugar, and tobacco multiplied by five. Every comfort, beyond the barest stay of life, was placed outside possibility. Tales of Paris doings made stoutest flesh creep, the awful name of *Rokelspir*, as they called him, put Satan out of mind, the ridiculous “thermidor” and “messidor”

became "schnorrider" and "fressider" on bitter secret lips. Conscription came to make, of peasant boys, bulls'-eyes for the enemies of their enemies; not one among the thousands ever reached captain's rank; five or six thousand francs was the hopeless ransom from service. The poor land must offer to the grim Moloch large hecatombs of its flowering youth. Not a family but mourned some loved child whose bones lay bleaching under the far burning suns of Spain or in glacial Russian wastes; of more than fourteen thousand conscripts furnished by the Department of Forests, only five thousand had returned to their homes at end of the appalling twenty years. Of the story of the *Kloppelkrieg* or Peasant-War, fanned by the clergy and nobles, that blazed out all over the country after Napoleon's departure for Egypt, of the brave resistance, of the murderous repression, I shall treat in connection with Clervaux. This revolt quashed, every firearm was confiscated, not an ounce of powder might be sold without Government permit, every bell which served no public clock was transported to Luxembourg; it was, as a priest said, a four years' Good Friday. Churches were shut, sacred vessels seized, priests who had not taken the constitutional oath thrown into gaol or banished to Cayenne or the islands of Oleron and Ré, their goods sold by auction. But the dogged courage had made an impression. Long after, the country was called Wolf-Land; when Napoleon, at glory's apogee, came to visit the fortress in 1814, he thought it wise to change horse and uniform several times during the inspection.

France never could keep Luxembourg.

*"Sum petra; petrino non crescunt lilia fundo;
In petris aquile nidificare solent,"*

writes a native poet. The day of release comes at last. France, bruised and panting, lies at the feet of the Allies.

With a relief not to be pictured, the sufferers see the French garrison depart. Napoleon's creditors are met in the Vienna Congress. Pending arrangements, the Forest Department is provisionally handed to Prussia. Out of the Congress, like Phœnix from the fire, rises the old Valois dream in a visible shape—the "Kingdom of the Netherlands". Holland and Belgium are once more united, in the person of His Majesty William I., Prince of Orange-Nassau-Vianden, himself scion of an old Luxembourg house, King of the Netherlands, and Grand-Duke of Luxembourg. This latter sovereignty was granted him in compensation for his Nassau-principalities, which he gave up to Prussia; although the Duchy was incorporated in the Germanic Confederation, thus getting two masters, whose relation to each other was confusing in the extreme. The province emerged shorn, too, from the Congress. Its Eifel portion was assigned to Prussia,—Moselle, Sûre, and Our forming the eastern boundary; while on the western side it was the gainer by most of the Duchy of Bouillon and part of the principality of Liège.

One would have thought the union of industrial and productive Belgium with commercial and colonising Holland a brilliant idea. What better isolation for refractory France? what better buffer between France and Germany? England's wary eye saw all her coasts gnashed upon by iron French teeth from Brest to Antwerp. England had not forgotten Napoleon's words, "France, holding the Scheldt, holds a loaded pistol at England's throat". What better safeguard than Holland and Belgium comfortably married and out of France's power? But our sagest provisions are apt to glance aside. You cannot parcel out continents at council-table. Holland and Belgium were never united, save only on paper. They were rather jammed together by pressure of surrounding Europe. They had been married before, and incom-

patibility of temper had wrought separation ; it was to be so again. The Flemings, denizens of Europe's cockpit, are, except in their inordinate tendency to petty municipal quarrels, a very ordinary people. They have neither the heroic patriotism nor the phlegmatic patience of their Dutch neighbours. They are French in disposition, and have grown up in servitude. The proud bearing of Holland towards populous Belgium, the royal favouritism of Holland, her Protestantism, her language which Walloons were compelled to learn with great difficulty, the obligation of Flemish priests to study in a heretical Louvain college, the imposition of fiscal burdens, the obstinately-deaf ear turned by William to the complaints that arose on every side,—these and other cracks began to gape between this latter-day Israel and Judah. At length, in the Revolution of 1830, all Flanders departed to her tents. Nine complicated years followed, during which there were three kings in our Brentford ; a government, that is, at Luxembourg, acting for the Royal Grand Duke, and another at Arlon, acting for Belgium ; and still the Prussian garrison sat on. At length, in 1839, the Treaty of London between Belgium and Holland fixed plainly the limits of the Grand Duchy, which may be seen upon the map to-day ; shearing off a third strip, the entire Walloon quarter, to form the Belgian "Province of Luxembourg". Thus, by three great mutilations—the work of the Treaty of the Pyrenees in 1659, the Congress of Vienna in 1815, and the Treaty of London in 1839—this historic principality has dwindled to a quarter of its extent under its first Duke Wenceslas I.

William II., the Waterloo "Prince of Orange", loved the Grand Duchy dearly, visited it frequently, organised its constitution, and placed it under the German Zollverein, as the visitor at the frontiers knows to his cost. His name is

graven indelibly in the hearts of the people, and his equestrian statue lords it over the Place Guillaume. In 1866, under William III., the Austro-Prussian "Seven Days' War" overturned the worm-eaten Germanic Confederation. After Sadowa the Duchy, for four centuries an apple of discord between France and Germany, went nigh to ante-date the war of 1870 by three years. France, her old envy unquenched, denied Prussia's right to keep her garrison at Luxembourg, which had now ceased to be a federal fortress, and offered to take it over herself as a counterweight to the acquisitions of Prussia. The latter, for her part, would not hear of a German-speaking country, the immemorial possession of the empire, which had borne Germany five emperors, passing under French sway. War was imminent for a moment.

But the matter was settled by arbitration. A special convention of the Great Powers met in London in 1867. The result was not unlike Solomon's verdict on the baby. It was plain that neither of these claimants ought to have Luxembourg; therefore it must cease to exist. So it was guaranteed a neutral State, and the military value of the town was destroyed by demolition of the fortifications; a happy arrangement for the people, as otherwise they would have tasted of fresh woes in the struggle that soon ensued between their flanking neighbours. The Prussian troops evacuated at once; marched out of the bristling, doomed war-nest, bands playing, colours flying; and the same day two little battalions of native *chasseurs* marched in. The demolition of the fortress proceeded in cold blood; and when all the hacking and blasting was over, on the day after the declaration of war between France and Prussia, a Prussian lieutenant-colonel and a French major visited the scene of chaos together, and pronounced grand old Luxembourg, from a military point of view,—valueless! Thus

the veteran fortress, from behind whose growing ramparts the nations of Europe had frowned successive defiance for a thousand years, found an ignoble death, coolly pulled to pieces by their common consent. It was as though Hercules had died of a cold. Straddling in burly virility, the peoples had wooed it in turn ; now, emasculated, torn asunder like Pentheus among the Bacchæ, it was to be neuter—or in modern phrase neutral, that is, nothing—for ever.

And that is what, as a citadel, it is now. But if Samson's strength is shorn with his locks, he has found enduring peace in compensation. Old Luxembourg has lost the fatal war-beauty which made her desirable in the eyes of the nations ; but the restful charm of old age has stolen over her worn features, and her wounds are stanchd for ever. "Say unto Jerusalem that her warfare is accomplished." Into the mouths of her citizens the national poet, Michel Lentz, has put this song :—

*"Kommt hier, aus Frankreich, Belgie, Preisen,
Mir wellen iech ons Hémecht weisen:
Frot dir no alle Seiten hin,
We mir esó zefride sin."*

This is in effect an invitation to French, Belgians, Prussians to come and walk about in the magic valley, to question its denizens, who will declare with one voice that they are content.

CHAPTER V

THE LAND AND FOLK TO-DAY

IF you take a good-sized map of the Duchy and a pen, you can draw through its whole breadth an almost straight line, which will divide it into two distinct parts. Below this line you will have the tract called Gutland, or Bon Pays; above it, the Oesling, which is a slice of the great region known as the Ardennes.

Now this Ardennes is not just a big spread of forest. It is more than that. You have to get to the bottom of things. The Ardennes, French, Belgian, and Luxembourgish, are the first upthrow of a chain of mountains stretching across central Europe to the plains of the Vistula in Poland, and getting higher and higher as they go eastward until in the Riesen Gebirge, the Giant Hills, they reach some five thousand feet. They are thickly wooded, simply because the lowlands have been cleared for agriculture; the German word *wald* has come almost to mean mountain. The *raison d'être* of the Ardennes is geological, not vegetable.

This Ardenne, then, is a very venerable patch of earth's surface. In the giddy distance of ages it had part and lot in Europe's début upon the scene of creation. Before the mountains were brought forth, our continent lay bathed in the primeval sea. Expansive forces, a-work in the central smithy of fire, upheaved the solid lands, and among

the first pushed up was our once-plateau of Arden. It has thus seen a pageant of cycles before which fancy reels. It has heard in its marshy forests the raging tempests of the carboniferous period which gave its coasts their first fringe of green. Its island shores have felt the hot surf of the Triassic sea. The saurians and pterodactyls of Jurassic suns have sported in its waters and left many a hoary tale of dragons to its folk. A low reach of plains in a shallow sea, it was upheaved to no extraordinary height, for the solid part of earth, her crust, was yet thin in those dim old days. Then eternity begat eternity, and raindrop and rivulet began their sawing and splitting and riving—every tiny drop with its endless freezing and thawing, its alternate expansions and contractions, blasting the rock like a mine—until a third eternity's dawn finds the sombre plains all smiling over with verdurous valleys and acclimant with river-laughter innumerable. We, good reader, are motes in that eternity, and can sun ourselves amid those Silurian vales and hear those streams rejoicing in their Devonian beds.

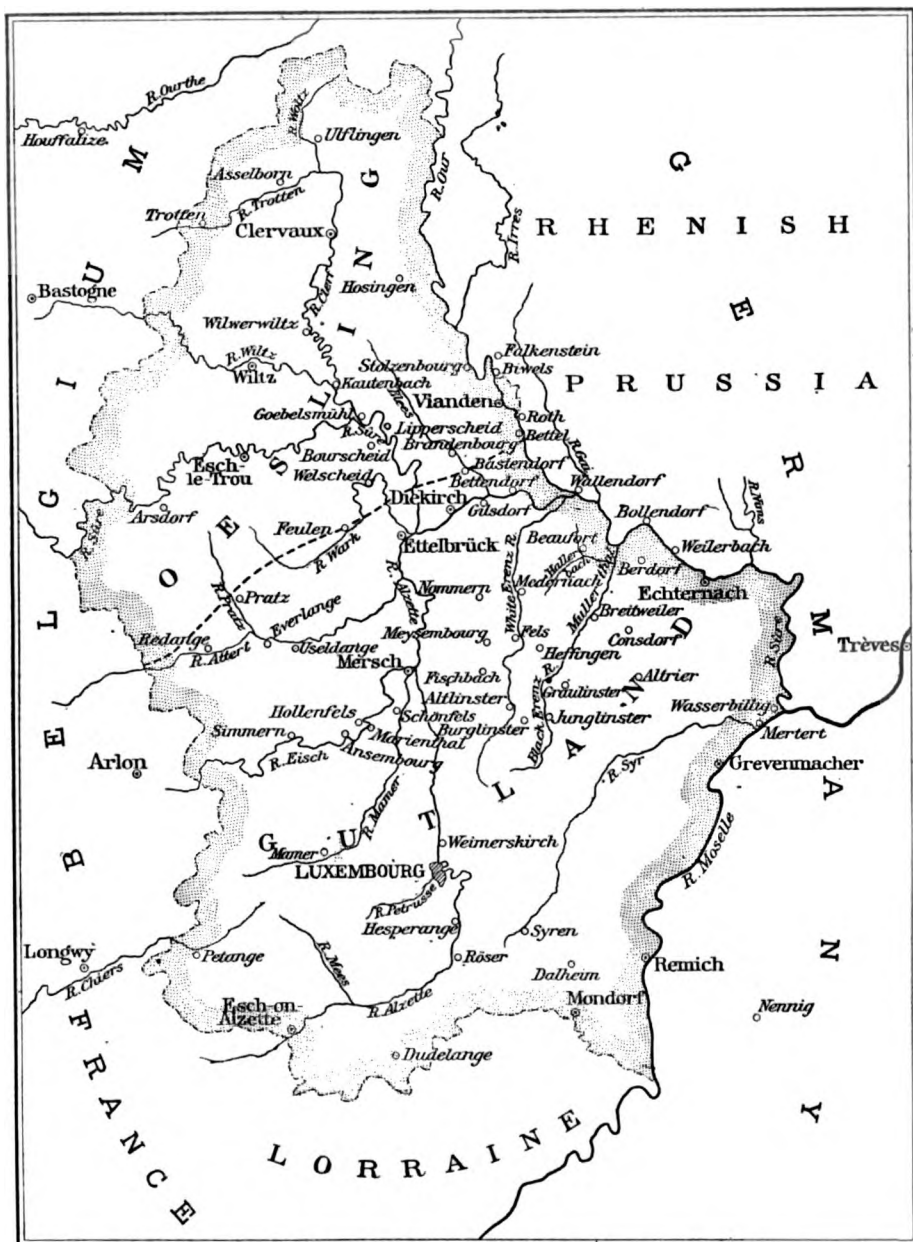
To this ancient system belongs the northern moiety of little Luxembourg ; marked off by Nature in every possible respect from the southern part, along the line you drew, as sharply as though the sea rolled between. For it did once roll here. The southern part was its bed, the dividing-line its beach, and the northern part high and dry above its billows. That line was the seaboard of emerged Ardenne. You cannot track it by ravine or river ; it is far older, deeper than all that ; such recent accidents are not birth-marks, they are the scars of yesterday, the wrinkles on a face that is growing old. You can track it, this line, all the way, as it has interested me to do, by a ribbon of soil averaging a mile wide, along which lie scattered round pebbles of white quartz, varying in size from a pin to a

baby's head. They are the shingle of the Triassic sea. The slaty schist of the old coast is veined every way with this quartz; the ocean ground the soft schist to powder and washed away its dust to found the lower land, but retired before it could finish the quartz. One can fancy the "melancholy, long, withdrawing roar" of the primordial breakers, as they sucked the pebbles to and fro, and

"sowed
The dust of continents to be."

That shore-line (denoted by a broken line in the accompanying map) is the landmark between phlegm and passion, between homely and romantic, between meadow and wilderness. Firstborn north-land is Esau, later-born south-land is Jacob; the tame land has supplanted the wild land, stolen its birthright of the plough. The south-land is cognate and continuous with the plains of Lorraine, a land of large undulations, wide cultivated fields, orchards roofed with fragrant snow, roses, vineyards, cornlands, resin-breathing wealds of fir and oak and beech, with here and there a capricious ring of Jurassic mountain, or high cone of the prevailing "Luxembourg Sandstone". Its soil is kindly, its folk are homely, its climate is mild and bland; often three hay-crops a year requite the labourer's toil. It contains the capital and the larger villages, boasts itself the focus of education and agriculture, is the more urbane moiety of the little state. Yet when the sterner north-land loomed above the lines of creamy spray that shaped these pebbles, this *Gutland*—good at fruit and flower—lay ambushed and unborn at the bottom of the sea.

And now, though the widest interval of latitude is not three-quarters of a degree, the north-land is as disparate, in all ways, from the south-land, as Macedon from Monmouth. Stand upon some highest point, as Eschdorf above the

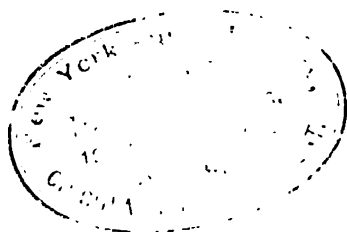


MAP OF THE GRAND DUCHY OF LUXEMBOURG

with the chief places and rivers mentioned in this book

For meaning of line thus --- see page 112

[To face p. 112



Sûre, or Bourscheid hamlet, and you might be looking out upon a wide sea which had been, at height of tempest's fury, suddenly petrified. All around you, exalted here, there abased, now blooming purple broom and scarlet digitalis, now uplifting piteous shift of scanty verdure to the sun, undulate these arrested schistous breakers of the world. The land has caught some eerie spirit of storm from the mad prehistoric mother-sea that bore it, her first brood, sired by fire. Labyrinthine amid the chaos profound and sweeping valleys luxuriate every way, nursing the sinuous streams that thread the scene with light. And many are the illusions of distance with which these deep narrow dykes make sport of the eye. That clump of trees, that belfry, that castle-ruin; surely it is but the toss of a stone away! Adventure, and see; when you have closed accounts with a brace of green precipices, at present invisible, you will be a panting, conscious hour older, and think respectfully of bird-kind.

Is this, then, a mountainous country? Properly, no. It is a plateau, fissure-cloven, in mean elevation fifteen hundred feet above the sea. The norm of the land is the height, not the vale. The steeps have not been thrown up from the deeps; the ravines have been hollowed out of the plain. Perhaps it is a fine October day, as you stand upon this beacon. Look all round you, and you will perceive that in all this paroxysm of little Alps there is a broad average of altitude. Lower your eyelids, and the height-differences vanish in the chiaroscuro, there is no more high and low, the wave-like turbulency melts, there is a great calm. That calm is the spirit of a plain; and it is as a plain that you are to look upon the Ardennes, if you would look scientifically. Could you imagine planks thrown across the ridges every way, you have the plain restored. But see, this disguised plateau is veined with narrow bands of mist, like

fleecy waves upon a level lake, which the morning breeze stirs lightly to and fro. It is these feathery lines that mark the courses of the streams, and teach you what deep characters the pens of time can grave in the tablets of eternity. Rightly understood, the valley-floors are highlands, for the lowest of them stands more than six hundred feet above the sea; and the out-topping ridges are a table-land, for the vales are afterthoughts of God. So that whenever, in speaking of the Oesling, I use the word "mountain", it must be understood as used conventionally and not strictly. It is true of nature's world as of the world of daily experience, that before the advancing feet of right knowledge many a valley shall be exalted, many a mountain and hill laid low.

Compared with Gutland, to this Oesling belongs a sharper air, a less thankful soil, and, by reason of the straitness of its valleys, a less extent of natural meadow-land; you will therefore find in it a higher, a very high, degree of cultivation; the lower spring of the valley-sides, along the river's course, well levelled, and colour-streaked with rye, oats, buckwheat, potatoes; the tiniest thread of water enslaved by little aqueducts that beguile its wanton windings into service. Those strips of pasture through whose shallow soil the black rock juts out here and there, are won from Nature's indolent dominion by dogged, patient toil. Many a steep too sheer for agriculture is massed with sturdy oaks, whose metallic green rolls like a garment down the slopes to meet its image in the stream; they are the landscape's pigment and the peasant's bread, for a precious manure, the carbonate of potash, is extracted from their ashes; thus even the dryad, like Alexander, "returneth into dust". Clambering the hills or tessellating the village outskirts in every variety of parallelogram you will see nurseries of baby fir-trees, spruce and smug as though Father Christmas had

here his pet plantation ; these, too, have their allotment and their use. The sister industry is farming, and the pig is paramount, though the poetry of thin-sliced ham or crisp curling rasher is unknown. In respect of piety, purity, pigs, and potatoes, Arden and Erin are twin.

But the conditions in heaven and earth which unbrace the Oesling's soil for bearing have done just the reverse for the *morale* of its sons. Wise Mother Nature, in obliging them to help her, has taught them to help themselves. They are hardier and sturdier than their southern neighbours, more independent. History has records of fine deeds of theirs, none the duller for the simple setting. These peasants, priests as well as people, have fought very manfully for hearth and altar. Moving about amongst them one can see this virile quality in their faces and their bearing, hear it in their speech. They are canny, not given to much talking, slow to stake themselves upon an impulse ; the eye has a reserve of force in it ; they are true Highlanders. For men are barometers after all, ordnance-maps, charts of stratification. Weather is psychology, rocks are ethics, clays and marls are history in embryo. Earth is mother, and her moods and passions are the birthmarks of her children.

In this country scientific agriculture, as a feature of education, is placed on a level with reading or writing. It comes next to religion, an eighth sacrament. There is not a devouter race in Europe ; but husbandry shares their thoughts with heaven. Cain, here, is a Catholic, his life at once a litany and a Georgic. He looks up to heaven, and then down on the earth to observe the effect. The child is weaned on technique of tillage, plays with share and harrow, and takes his first easy lessons in manure-lore at his mother's knee. The soil is the peasant's Bible, and he makes deep study of it, critical, exegetic, and devotional. There is no scamped work for scanty wage. Entailed land is unknown.

There is no land that cannot be sold. State or Commune sells or lets the land to the peasant, and aids him to the usufruct with protection and counsel. All property is equally divided among children, a man may not leave all to one. The monstrosity of the greedy, lazy firstborn drone, wasting the patrimony while his sisters want, is unheard-of. Hence every man has his parcel of ground, it is his own, and upon his labour in it hangs his sustenance ; whence is bred a devotion to the labour, a cunning, loving interest in it. The poorest churl is here as much a landed proprietor as was ever the baron in the crumbling ruin that crowns the hill against which his cottage leans ; and finds his glebe the richer for the blood-stream whose ceaseless tides have absolved his miserable villeinage. If immobility for ages be any part of birth-pride, that peasant is no parvenu ; his forbears have dwelt in the village, most likely, from the days of Siegfried or Ermesinde, perhaps since Ambiorix or Indutiomar ; and the amassing heritage has been this same skilled yeoman eye, and hand, and head.

Every Government which has sat at head of affairs since the country's autonomy has recognised its agricultural character, and the present régime is a happy climax. Agrarian machinery has reached the highest pitch of development. Every boy is sent to an agricultural school, must qualify in the soil-faculty. Let it be remembered that the art of agriculture is rooted in several exact sciences, notably chemistry, and you will conceive some respect for that square and rather stolid headpiece which you meet sweat-beaded in the coppice of *pepinières* or bowed forward beneath the wildrose-bundle in the evening glow. Or if brains be lacking, the little motherly Polity will supply them. At Ettelbrück, in mid-territory, is a College of Agriculture, a sort of soil-hospital with a chemical laboratory, rich in all furniture of mind and matter needful to minute analysis.

If any soil fall sick, if any produce will not grow, the owner sends a sample to this hospital ; it is diagnosed without charge, he is told wherein it is ailing, how to doctor it. A villager of Mersch had just done this, he told me—his grass was meagre, the mischief was soon pointed out. The masses of trees, that seem to the stranger a mere infinite of wild and haphazard luxuriance, are subjects of a surveillance as strict as the beds in your garden, and the State regulates their woodmanship as methodically ; the axe is laid to no root without scientific sanction. If highest art be art's concealment, then is the landscape-gardening here a masterpiece, for the land's beautiful wild face feigns to spurn all law but love's. Yet truly the hairs of its head are numbered.

In the matter of live stock the State shows itself not less obliging. The native goat is a charming little creature, graceful as a chamois, but Nanny is larger in Switzerland, gives more and better milk, and that thrice daily. So every year a knowing buyer is commissioned to go to the land of lakes and lay out a certain sum in goat-kind, paying money down. If then a peasant needs a fine goat he has only to buy it from the Government, in which case he gets, if he wants it, three years' credit. So with the bulls, cows, and horses imported from Belgium. But opinion seems to be divided as to the morality of this principle. A prominent citizen of Diekirch descants me loudly in its favour ; an equally prominent luminary of Vianden puts finger to nose, winks the other eye, and disloyally hints that the Government was not born yesterday, and that the credit system encourages the peasant to buy that which he does not want simply because he can pay for it by instalments. I suppose there are wheels within wheels in Paradise itself, when one gets to know it. Prizes are given every year for the finest cattle ; the competing beasts, tethered all along

the street at Diekirch and other places, are a wonder of resentful din and sturdy sleekness.

The cupboard of the little family may be stocked with the plainest fare ; it may even contain a skeleton or two ; but its shelves have enough for all, so that they will work honestly, live cleanly, and fear God. Begging is a penal offence. If by rare chance you meet a beggar you may be sure he is a foreign tramp ; the gendarmerie will unceremoniously escort him to the frontier. The spirit of self-help is regnant. Bureaux de Bienfaisance, under conduct of the Commune, care for the disabled and the helpless at Saturday sessions. There is what we should deem poverty ; a few thousand francs a year counts for passing riches ; but destitution is rare. Sickness is the worst wolf, and dreaded, for it soon snaps up savings. Many insure themselves, and the well-to-do help the fund. Hard work lasts from spring to autumn ; All Saints, an universal fête, is the signal for a long Sabbath of hibernation, well earned and necessary ; the land then sleeps, and men and women sleep. The word *Toussaint* is synonymous with rest.

Concerning class-distinctions, they are absent. There is a perfect social equation. The people find a happy, loyal level, like their hundred streams. They realise Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, without talking about them. If any stand in eminent consideration it is the veterinary surgeon and the priest. They are the warders of the country's two souls, and are honoured accordingly. My friend M. Bourges, the cattle-doctor at Fels, is as well-bred and intelligent a man as you could wish to meet. I may mention here that elementary instruction is rigidly enforced ; everyone can read and write. No diploma of any foreign university has any professional weight in the country. Lawyers, doctors, and school-professors, whatever their degree, must pass examina-

tion before a yearly commission at Luxembourg before entering upon practice.

The tendency to "sit with vine-leaves in the hair," as Ibsen somewhere delicately phrases, is among these excellent folks not unknown. I was invited to a wedding in a village near Luxembourg. In the old church, after the ceremony, the couple solemnly embraced before the altar, knelt to both parents, and waltzed out of church. Local custom has wide licences, and I liked this. But not what followed: for at the bride's house—where the guests ate their meat with their knives and fingers, without plates or forks, off a spotlessly clean table—the happy pair seriously and deliberately set themselves to make everyone drunk, and succeeded only too well.

Catholic Religion reigns, nowhere supreamer. Other faiths total up at one per cent. Protestant Briareus, reaching over the land every way, forgot to clutch it. The fare of Wiclif, Huss, and Luther was caviare to the unlearned, and in the village life of the Moselle-basin brains were stagnant. The *odium theologicum* has been glad of the region for bear-garden and rubbish-heap; but no dour-visaged apostle of the reformed doctrine was ever at the pains to pluck so insignificant a brand from the burning—there has never been a Protestant Willibrord, and should any such arise he would have an evil time. When the Reformation was seething in the European cauldron Luxembourg was a headquarters of Spanish troops, good at spoiling any heretical brew. Moreover, grim Church principalities sat round—Trèves, Liège, Cologne. The issue, whatever it may have been in the highest senses, has been good from the æsthetic point of view; to wit, that these delicious valleys, saved from the dull Lutheran respectability that takes the heart out of so much of Switzerland's beauty, have kept the ancient faith alive in its most charmingly pagan forms. The

folk are as other-worldly as Bretons, every whit, and less priggish, because they do not have sentimental British tourists reminding them that they are interesting, and putting them into wan pictures and flabby novels. Yet equally strange old religious customs, of great antiquity, are legion; pilgrimages, kermesses, healing springs and performing statues link every hamlet with a hoary past. In presence of some of these archaisms one can scarcely realise the century. Folklore bristles with wild tales of haunt and pixie, of gnome and sylph and wizard; men seem never to have forgotten the old gods, conjuring up in half-awed and half-regretful talk the times when St. Pirmin or St. Eligius disenchanted the woods and streams and laid the spells of *faërie* with the Cross. Communion with the dead is passionately cherished, and black masses never cease. Shrines, Christs, Pietàs with impossible cherubs, Byzantine-looking hallows, some of great age, guard roadside, bridge and carrefour, glare from niches in the rocks. The country has its familiar saints, recurring in the churches with a deeply-characteristic fidelity. It returned, ages since, its representatives to the heavenly parliament, and reposes every confidence in them. There is St. Donatus—Donner or Thor under a baptismal name; St. Hubert with his hind, the golden cross between its antlers; St. John Nepomucene with his crucifix, St. Rusticus, St. Lupus, St. Celsus with his horse, St. Faertert (George) with his dragon, St. Roch with his wounded thigh; St. Catherine with her wheel, St. Barbara, patron of the dying, with her castle and palm, St. Peter with the last fowl he would have chosen, one might think, for a badge. Devotion is carried into the farmyard and the cattle-pen; pigs, cows, horses, birds surround, in effigy, the altars; every imaged hallow has his four-footed pet nuzzling his feet. This is sweet and like St. Francis; all the brutes are brothers here, poor dear dumb co-heirs of salvation, remembered even with Aves after they are gone.

I am disgracing myself, I know, but all this makes me quite glad at heart. One is so in love with the "single eye" that one reverences it even when it winks. To the consideration of the caviller I commend the fact that these same people go to mass at five in the morning daily, and that sunset Angelus finds serried ranks of them in church, saying their evening prayers. Their labour is the labour of beasts of burden from sunrise to sundown, but they crowd their little sanctuaries in self-dedication first and last. That ought to set seal of pensive quiet upon some mobile British tongues, clerical no less than lay, which are loud upon "continental tawdriness and superstition". I am no papist, but beams are beams; and here, if motes there be, they seem to dance in a sort of sunshine against which our light moral and spiritual takes on a very yellow tinge. These children of the soil have continued down the ages, never greatly recking what political thunders rolled above their heads, or which particular tyrant styled himself their master. Let the map change as it might, the boundaries were mostly limned in blood, and they were well used to that. They were too busy to care much about these things. But they cared for their God. If its effects upon conduct be any test of a religious system, Luxembourgish Catholicism comes out brightly, for in the matter of honesty and chastity the people are resplendent. I know something of the drunkenness, the gambling, and the impurity hidden snugly under the smiling beauty of many an English country-side. But here bad conduct of any sort is held by public opinion to be beneath the dignity of ransomed human nature. Self-conscious and windy talk about salvation there is none, nor any newspaper religiosity. Yet the thing itself is carried as a guiding principle through all the commonest phases of daily life. Illegitimate births are at vanishing-point, and a man who has to do with his neigh-

bour's wife is a social pariah. Were not the ill-natured calumny about the "moral degeneracy of Catholic races" well-nigh extinct among intelligent and decent folk, such lives would help towards its refutation.

I append an incident, witnessed by me, which may instance this sturdy piety. A French tourist at Reisdorf station, seeing his bicycle somewhat carelessly handled by a porter, addressed him thus: "*Sacré nom de Dieu! tu ne pourrais pas faire plus attention! peut-on être bête à ce point-là!*" Leaning the bicycle against a wall and calmly folding his arms, the man looked the speaker in the face, and answered: "*Tu sais, M'sieur, n'y a pas de 'Nom de Dieu' ici au Luxembourg! Que tu m'appelles bête, ça m'est égal; mais que tu dises 'Nom de Dieu'—je n'veux pas! Si tu ne t'excuses pas, je ne mettrai pas ta bécane dans le train—sais tu!*"

Just then the whistle went—and the offender had to obey with what grace he might.

I said the land had a belt, parting its younger from its older slice. That goes back into the small hours of creation. But there is (as will be seen on the map) a second natural parting, merely old, which apes that other and perplexes it. This is a river—the Sûre, mother of the land's innumerable streams; *Germanice*, Sauer (compare, for pretty Alsace, Elsass). Belgian by birth and for six leagues of joyous adolescence, it becomes Grand-Ducal in the prime of its beauty, and wantons in devious mazes all across the land of its adoption until vinous Moselle takes it prisoner on her strong journey Rhinewards. The two belts, the land-belt and the water-belt, stretching in the same general direction, cross one another like an open pair of scissors. A casual glance would take the river for the land's true equator; an observer knows better. Of fifty miles of Moselle, once owned by powerful Luxembourg, about twenty remain. Coming down tumultuously from the heights of the Vosges

it bounds the Duchy eastward, until, leaving Sûre to take up the tale, it winds away to Coblentz, its "confluence". Ausonius, Gratian's tutor, in his beautiful poem "Mosella", sings the Sûre; and Venantius Fortunatus, tutor to Sigbert king of Austrasia, in verses descriptive of his voyage to Andernach, rejoices to meet her on his way. Palmy days were when Sûre too with its affluence of affluents was the country's own from forest-source to mouth. Cutting for itself one long deep narrow ravine of caprices across the schist of Ardenne, it seems to play perpetual hide-and-seek with the sun, more than doubling its labour, writhing out thirty-four miles into eighty-two. It is a bright silver rosary of old villages, some squat on the height, some snug in the vale, forgotten sherds of Roman or feudal greatness, many of them; all fair, and good to pry in, if you like piecing together the chips of lore, and do not itch for spectacle; a few enchanting. Half-way across, it dips out of Oesling into the trias of Gutland, at Erpeldange where the Alzette joins it; from Upper Sûre becomes Lower Sûre, soberer, straighter, in season navigable. High Sûre is a mountain trout-stream, bounding over the rocks of Ardenne, here a silver thread through a damask of flowers, darkening there between grey ramps at goat's-leap-distance; now flaccid and drought-faint, now swollen into a salient passion by the storm, now wide and serious for the weeping of winter snows the sun has stricken to the heart. Low Sûre has calmer reaches, a soul more constant.

Water's work is to refine fire's. Rivers feign to be the world's upsetters; they are its atoners. If they cut out mountains, it is that they may compensate plains, carrying the waste of the hills and silting it up round their death-beds in fertile glebes. Their ministry is to make all things uniform, to put down the mighty from their seat, and to exalt the humble and meek. Of such æonial repair of

creation's rough-cast a man can scarce take cognisance ; for our longest life, in that *annus magnus*, is just a tick of the clock. Sûre does her tiny part in this business. Towards the end of her course her fall decreases, her pace slackens, she throws down from time to time her fruitful silty spawn, marshes appear, islands are born in mid-stream, Echternach rises upon its rich green alluvial bed.

And what is the last goal of the pregnant river, as of every tributary rill and rivulet, mountain-brook and murmuring burn, that quickens this land like an arterial system radiant through flush of fairest flesh ? Surely the needy hollows of Holland, hard prest by the sea. All the laden streams seek the Sûre ; Sûre Moselle, Moselle Rhine, Rhine Zuyder Zee and the rolling ocean beyond the dunes. The streams of further Arden fulfil the spirit of Willibrord and his heroes, who first from these vales went out, stream-like, to water poor Frisia with the truth ; the spirit of the land's own history, ever by fate bound up with Holland's, whose great deliverer, William the Taciturn, issued hence, whose royal line was cradled here ; so these streams, melting down the hills so patiently, are at work for the love of that low country

“ Where the broad ocean leans against the land ” ;

lending their mite to mend that brave country's lack of soil, forming those alluvial delta-lands the Rhine helps to make where Zeeland's isles toil out her motto, “ *Luctor et emergo* ”. It is thus that rich Europe, careful for the Lazarus-lands that lie at her gates, sends her crumbs in charity. One day Holland will have earth enough, will cease to strive, will look out redeemed upon the baffled sea ; who knows ? It only needs another eternity or two.

All the streams, I say, seek the Sûre. They spend and are spent exclusively in their country's service ; and of this

service the Sûre is steward. The Sûre is the country, as the nervous system is the man. It is a tree of many branches and twigs aspread, with the whole land for leafage. The land belongs to the Moselle basin ; that claims every drop of its life-sap, and Sûre is charged with receipt of custom. Quite a pageant she holds in her transit, sweeping between the streams that dance in right and left to kiss her skirts, as troops of children gathering flowers might fly to clasp the robe of some admired fair maiden, passing and beckoning. Thus the whole current of the land's being sets to the east. Only one sulky stream flows westward, Franceward, owning Meuse for mistress—the Chiers.

Deputy for the Sûre is her chief affluent, the Alzette ; which in her name sucks up the southern waters and renders, at middle flow, her faithful account. This river, ascending the middle of the country, makes a course somewhat sedate, being big with rich ooze which she spends upon the land. That courtly old Ausonius, impartial poet of Luxembourg's streams, does not forget her :

*"Nec minor hoc, tacite quæ per sola pinguis labens
Stringit frugiferas felix Alisontia ripas."*

She seems somewhat unfairly named, this Alzette—*Uol Sap*, stony river—for fruitfulness is the girdle of her reins. But the name comes down the misty steep of ages. Though her southern course is in part narrow and tortuous, cut through the jagged sandstone—it is in this mood that she bears the city of Luxembourg upon her abrupt flanks—yet two of the fairest and fattest valleys, south and north of this city, are her creation. The one is Röser, the other embosoms the country's Delphi, Mersch—smiling trinity of streams, the navel of the land, a round goblet indeed, a heap of wheat set about with lilies. Both vales (as Mersch or Marisca hints) are the bottoms of old lakes formed by the river and

drinking it, until after cycles of insistence it wrought successive issue through the sandstone bluffs that barred its yonder way. That was not merely before Luxembourg Town had name or being, but before the great serpentine ravine, now spanned by seven mighty bridges like the markings of a colossal snake, was aught but a purview in the Promethean womb of time. I suppose then that in the name Alzette we are to see some primal consciousness of this trend of things.

Save in respect of these two agonies, the Alzette's current is as straight and peaceful as is the Sûre's sinuous and tormented. As the queen-bee trails her responsible hips, so rolls she her tinted waters with grave sense of maternity. And yet the gladder stream, sobered for an hour as she folds her demure sister in her arms, goes on her way as limpidly, as laughingly, as before.

Of old time this further Sûre, broad and deep, served for the floating of merchandise to Trèves. Till half-a-century ago you might have seen the long flotillas of rafts, freighted with minerals and precious oak-bark, creeping down from Diekirch to join, upon Moselle and Rhine, their companions coming from the Black Forest and the Vosges. But road and rail have changed all that, and the stream's blue bosom is consecrate, as before man's brief distraint of toil, to cloud and star, to glint of kingfisher and dragon-fly.

Time would fail to tell here of a hundred other streams, of fair-flowing Prussian-born Our, that delicate westerly bracelet of the land with Vianden for jewel; of Clerf's snaky path past pellucid Clervaux; of Wiltz, her confluent, dubbed after Charlemagne's Pomeranian colonists; of Black and White Erenz, bright Gemini in a sky of brooks, named from the race they run—White foaming through weirs in an open valley of sunshine, Black, albeit comely above all her sisters, darkening her crystal dances amid the lofty

rock-glooms of the Müllerthal ; tumbling Bles, Brandenburg's retainer, now rolling treacherously under ambush of boulders, now bursting over the meadows in havoc of flood ; Attert, the "Ethereal," proud Eisch with her storied procession of castles, Wark, the "Lazy," losing her way in a leafy dream and doubling, by two leagues, her toil ; Hallerbach, the idyllic, sweetest of all, nursing-mother of rare ferns and mosses in her exquisite glen. In this little patch of a thousand square miles are two thousand miles of water walking and leaping and praising God ; picture then, in the way of average, that each square mile of mead and vale and forest has a ribbon of crystal crossing it and doubling back again. Here is good scope for the painter and the angler and the poet, but the idler fares best.

For he, uncumbered with mahlstick or rhyme or rod, is free to hold speech with these streams, to breathe the several moods that each, all varying and every one with a distinctive character of its own, is carrying with it as it goes ; to ponder upon their motives, why they make this *détour*, that avoidance ; why now they sun themselves along green carpets diapered with flowers, now mince along vain-gloriously under fine poplar awnings, now trench themselves coyly in abysses of valleys ; why one loiters and another leaps ; why all love the east, running counter to the sun ; why the salmon mount the left affluents of the Rhine and their left affluents and theirs again, never the right, to spawn in autumn ; and whether, when the rivers nurse village namesakes, the village or the stream was named first. Myself I think the latter ; for, first, the hamlet's name is always the longer form ; secondly the river was there before it ; and thirdly, the earliest inhabitants, anterior to the Celts—whoever they were—were roving hunters, who would naturally give names to the silver clues which guided them about their wilderness. Who were they ? for with all our

plausible conjectures there is nothing in any ancient Gaulish or Teutonic idiom that satisfactorily accounts for more than a few of these short, sharp river-names. Were they Laplanders, Esquimaux—the dwarf-race of so many a folk-fable of central Europe?

That was twilight ; we cannot tell. Yet in any case there is a curious mystery, it seems to me, in a river's name. It associates itself with the river, in all its humours, so intimately ; the river, if you get to know it, could by no possibility be anything other than what it is called ; and yet—what an oddity, that it should have a name ! One can grasp the association of a town with its title, because (*pace* electrons, radium, and other modernities that proclaim the old *πάντα ῥεῖ*) a town has some sort of stability. But to name a river ! a thing that is not a thing, but a succession of accidents, a wriggling *rêverie*, a perpetual wave ! it is like naming a dream or a spirit. It has no Identity, no Substance ; what is it, then, that is named ? every drop of water that ever bubbled, has yet to bubble, out of a certain fissure in the Cotswolds, is that, in its turn, "Thames", until it finds the sea ? then either "Thames" has been every drop of circling water in the world, or there is no Thames—Thames is a myth.

How elusive it seems ! And yet, can "You", or "I", with far slighter part to play upon the scene of things, and changing our garments, in that part, with equal fluctuancy, set up any better right to a name ? When you come to think of it, even a personal pronoun is an impertinence, in the circumstances.

Of beasts. Observe those stalwart, Tyrolese-looking hunters, often to be met, their kind, large, lean brown dogs ambling at heel ; sociable dogs whose chops never cease to slobber, making damp love to you in *diligence* or train. Their *raison d'être* is wildpig, the national foe, who makes

sport like Samson for the Philistines. Once rare, in later times he increased and multiplied, and now roams the wilderness in right of numbers, lord of the forest's manor. They say that since 1866 and 1870 he has taken a new lease of these woods, as though, scared by the noise of war from his lairs in central Germany and France, he had found a haven in the jungles, almost unexplored, that lay between. Night is his foraging-time. From these snug dens round Mersch and Bastendorf and Fels he sallies forth into the fields, makes sweet loot of the young potatoes and other succulent rhizomes dear to the porcine soul. But he is at no pains to cover up his loping tracks, and it is by these trotter-marks, radiating from his wildwood lair, that his enemy ascends to his undoing.

The time of hunting is the time of snow, for boar's tracks ; and Sunday, for man's leisure. If you make known your wish to take part in autumn's and winter's official *battues*, you are pretty sure of an invitation. Climbing the almost vertical heights in heavy snow is hard work indeed. A trackeur is sent out to trace the spoor ; he reports the quarry at home in a given cover, and the party sets out. Every man has first drawn a numbered ticket, to determine his place in the *chasse*. Stools, flasks, umbrellas figure in the procession. Arrived at the cover, the Garde de Chasse disposes his men in a half-circle round the forest, according to their numbers ; the head-keeper blows his horn, the dogs go in, and the *sangliers* come out. How far they come out of course depends. They are good runners, bleed fluently, and take a deal of killing. He who kills, gets head and hide, as witness the grinning bristly jowls that deck the walls in many a house at Vianden or Fels. The hunt will perhaps last for days. It has its dangers ; a zealous dog or two may be ripped open, but they will sew him up quick, and he will go to bed and get well.

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Another and less sportsmanlike way, going out of vogue, is to trap the pig by means of an appeal to that tender instinct which, in common with all Nature's household, dominates his bristly bosom. It is on this wise. A spot is found where steep rocks make a bay or rectangle, and the enclosure is completed with a palisade. Then a sow of his species is caught and put into the pen for bait. All in the night the gallant hog, lured by that genial spell which makes pig and poet perennial, his dark body blundering through the brushwood and his tusks glinting in the moonlight, appears above the rocks. *Voilà Paradis*—and Eve unwooded. *Facilis descensus*; he makes it, half-rush half-roll. But in the crowded moment he has forgotten that he has a wife and pink brood of boarlings at home in his own thicket; and that is where we have him, for it is categorical that pigs do not fly, and none the more does any pig climb. So Nimrod has domination over him in the morning. Here the Homeric reader will recall a certain uproarious tale about Ares, Aphrodite, and Hephæstus, in the *Odyssey*.

Other beasts, now pushed away before the face of man, have left their fossil bones, so to speak, in names of village and river. The wolf, who shows his bitter face but rarely, snarls still in the name of Wolwelage hamlet, and no doubt in Ulfingen. Bruin seems to have been once a puissant seigneur, if we may judge by his fiefs of Berburg, Berdorf, Berwart, Berweiler, Bereldingen, Beringen, Bersbach, Beyren. The European bison, *Bos Urus*, German *Auerochs*, who is to-day quite out of date unless a few specimens are still jealously preserved in the great Russian forest of Bialovicz, was the eponymous hero of the river Our, of the villages of Ouren, Urhausen, Ursfelt. Bigelbach, supposed to stand for Buffelbach, and Wisenbach, refer us to the German Büffel and Wiesent, buffalo; Pliny says, "Uris et bison-tibus Germanicæ imperitum vulgus Bubalorum nomen

imposuit". Then that great glossy rat who builds river-towns, the Beaver, once colonised these streams and woods, as Biver, Bivels, Bivisch, Bivingen attest. The eagle is almost become a stranger, save now and again when he has lost his way from some Alpine eyrie, but you can certainly hear the flap of his wings in Arsdorf, and perhaps in Erenz; and that predatory bird, *Strix Bubo Grand-Duc*, who is scarce less than eagle, still swoops on farmyards, carries off many a fowl. As to the lynx, that compromise of dog and cat, his sinister eye still gleams in the patois-verb *loussen*, to look sly, and the noun *loussert*, a sly man, both derived from the Luxembourgish *Louswolff*, a lynx; the *lous* in which words has no connection with modern High German; also perhaps in the frequent surname Lux: German Luchs. There is more of the sort, but I grow tiresome. Æschylus speaks somewhere of "rolling a big ox upon the tongue", which is germane both to my prolixity and my theme. These people have a tolerable Museum of Extinct Zoology in their mouths every day, did they but know it. But could we read the reverse of every word-coin we bandy in the commerce of common talk, we should be wise above measure; and sometimes ignorance is bliss. They have enough to do with their pigs and their prayers.

In currency of commerce, of chronology, and of communication, Luxembourg is trine. Which is to say, the country has three coinages, three times, and three tongues, all in full but independent vigour and vogue, like the balls a juggler keeps up with both hands. The official coinage is French, and coins of the Latin Union are current, but the popular money is German gold and silver with Luxembourg and Belgian nickel pennies, halfpennies, and mites to a degree quite microscopic. So franc and mark and thaler jostle one another in your pocket, and you have to be doing quick little sums in your head whenever you ask for a glass

of beer—an exercise of whose pleasant glow some idea may be formed from the fact that fifty pfennig are equivalent to sixty-two-and-a-half centimes. Of course you can simplify matters by waiving the two-and-a-half centimes. No Anglo-Saxon with any nobility of character cares about two-and-a-half centimes. On the third day of my first stay my every pocket bulged with small specie like the old soldier in Hans Andersen's tale after his visit to the dog with eyes as big as saucers. Upon locking myself up and counting my hoard to five places of decimals, I found that I had been tempting Providence by carrying about with me undefended, through those lonely woods and valleys, the sum—roughly—of one-and-sevenpence. The principle is splendid if you want to scatter money among the crowd: but as I am neither a king in melodrama nor a mediæval baron coming of age, I took to lordly refusal of small change. The simple native is scrupulous to an irritating degree; but I cannot help thinking there must be a tidy profit somewhere. As touching time, there are three likewise. There is the time of central Europe, observed on the railway, thirty-five minutes ahead of the real time; the local time, observed everywhere else, an hour ahead of Greenwich time; and the time by your watch, which is a time that never was on sea or land, half the time. Thus between meal-time, church-time, train-time, and bed-time one realises “the faithless coldness of the times”. Myself I always employ the following little formula, which I can recommend for its simplicity: when my watch makes it twenty-five minutes past three, it is twenty-five minutes past four in a general sense, and five o'clock if one wants to catch a train.

The official language is French. The polite language is German. The real language is a skein of most languages, worked on a bone of Middle German. At a lawsuit in Diekirch I heard the following concert: the cross-examina-

tion of witnesses was held in Luxembourgish, the Public Minister spoke sometimes in German, sometimes in French, the advocate pleaded in French, and the judge pronounced sentence in German. The local patois is the joint heritage of Celts, Suevi, Romans, Carolingian Franks, Saxons, and every other of the many races, immigrant or invading, whose footsteps are here. It leaps from High German to Dutch and back again, and plays arpeggios of large compass upon the gamut of Grimm's Law; a sort of pan-Teutonic Olla Podrida, with whole French words "like fossils of the rock imbedded and injellied". It is highly analytical, inflexions being almost absent, so that the simplest idea has to be paid out in a bunch of small change. Many Alemannic and Swabian words appear, as *zaz*, she-dog; *niéchter*, last night; *more morgens*, to-morrow morning; *mader*, mower; *eppes*, something; *pobst*, pope. I have found amusement in listening for English words, or their first cousins, which abound. They were imported by the Saxons whom Charlemagne brought here to be converted. Here is a bunch of them:

ham	gëlzen, to geld
cabbage	verspénen, to feed with a spoon
shabby	schneffeln, to snip
wick	glêf, leaf
bocks, trousers	schmack, smack (of a whip)
pachen, to patch up	monkeg, mumps (sulks)
kneip, knife	heed, head
nabbeln, to nibble	glott, glutton
beienhap, bee-hive	gâpsen, to gape
kallen, to call	maakeg, meek
kâp, cap	gabber, gabble
fëschteren, to foster	

and, most curious of all, *knaeschteg*, nasty, and "Wo!"

to stop a horse. The people are quite proud of their "English" words.

The French element in the language is not of its essence. A conscious poverty of expression has borrowed it. For four centuries the country has been administered in French; French is diligently taught in the schools; numbers spend years in France to learn French; and, so, when native words are lacking, it is French words that are called in to supply the want. Hence arise terrific cross-breeds like this, by a judge to a prisoner: "*dir sit accuséert d'libertét vun den enchèren entravéert ze hun.*" But these words do not assimilate into the idiom, which is in itself strictly Teutonic. They are soon forgotten; the language returns to the rock whence it was hewn. Such French words as come to stay change their form, as *forschet* for *fourchette*, *femmen* for *fumer*, *guetten* for *guêtres*. Sometimes, curiously enough, purely Teutonic words will barter their natural gender for that of their French equivalents: *flo*, flea, though *floh* in German is masculine, becomes feminine because *puce* is so; *eck*, corner, and *botter*, butter, though *ecke* and *butter* in German are feminine, become masculine because *coin* and *beurre* are so. This, I should think, is a prank rare in language. It is a good instance of the Gallophile tendency of the people, which shows ironically against the background of two inexorable facts; first, that the successive typhoons which have so blasted their fair land that scarce one stone has been left upon another, blew from France; and secondly, that the more French they try to be, the more palpably do they remain what nature has made them—absolutely and essentially Germanic. This love of ever-hostile France and dislike of Germany, which has never harmed them, and to which they belonged throughout the epoch of their first glory, is doubtless traceable to the antagonism shown by the upstart kingdom of Prussia to the

grand old Austrian house—their eighteenth-century patron, benefactor and friend.

The language is a spoken one merely. Some patriotic souls have made effort to write in it; poetry, legends and so forth have appeared. But the people have always been poor, consuming their forces in the struggle for existence; hence abstract and lofty ideas find but scanty clothing in their linguistic wardrobe. Add to this the local variability of dialect—four marked varieties, Alzette, Sûre, Moselle, and Oesling—and the question of spelling where never man spelt, and you may conclude that Shakspeare and Goethe can sleep on in tolerable tranquillity as concerning rivalry in this quarter.

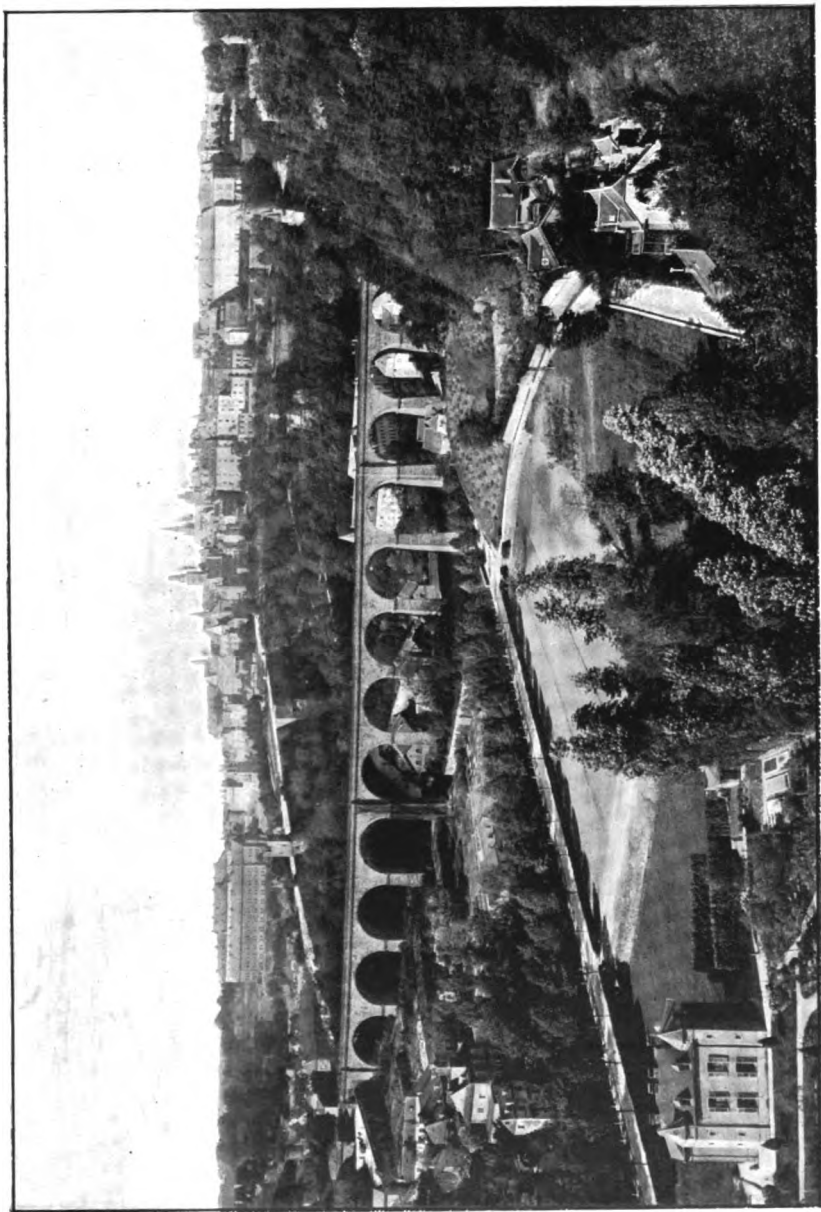
Still, if the people are not literary, they are linguists. For everyone pretending to any education speaks both French and German; and I have certainly never met an English farmer or field-labourer who had three languages. The Luxembourgeois is looked upon by the French as one of Germany's country-cousins, and by the Germans as a provincial Frenchman. When he goes into Germany people say, "How well you speak German for a Frenchman!" while in France the remark is, "I really never knew a German with such an excellent French accent."

CHAPTER VI

THE CITY AND THE TOWN

THIS city Luxembourg is absolutely *sui generis*. I rank it among the most strikingly-picturesque cities. Ransack it, read its runes of history, written over one another in unbroken series, as the geologist reads the strata of the rock-beds, and it grows into an enchantment. The town may be roughly sketched as a flattened "S", the one great valley-wriggle of the Alzette on its straight way northward to the Sûre. Into the lower shoulder of this figure runs the tiny brook Petrusse, Petrosa ; a mere thread of silver water, but ravelled in a ravine as steep and stony as the other ; once, strong locks menaced both streams, to make of their vales great lakes in time of siege. Upon this coil of tangled abysses, here rugged and bare, here green and flower-renitent, here clothed still with the old massy stone-aprons of war-days, abutting with pointed towers or gaping with dark loopholes, lies scattered and vast a city unlike to any other in the world. To the west lies the high town, to the east this low town with its Himalaya-mazes spanned by that imperious curving procession of air-drawn bridges which cross the field of vision every way and set seal of character on all. Luxembourg was once redans and ravelins, battlements, mantlets, moles, and barbicans ; now it is bridges.

It was by this deep and complex ravine of Petrusse and Alzette, embracing Luxembourg on three sides, that nature



[To face p. 136

LUXEMBOURG
(FROM FORT THÜNGEN)



throned the fortress above its peers ; the western side, art sealed with fosses, with monster walls, with redoubts and bastions defiant and interminable. Until this strong world was made chaos the fortifications, with their feudal, Spanish, French, Austrian and German layers, rose so high that not a house was to be seen. Now, the trenches are filled up, the triple cincture of walls thrown down, the scarps and counterscarps, the gardes and contregardes supplanted by sylvan parks and happy habitations of peace ; the immense stone casings, which mended the least gap or irregularity in the rocky precipices and made them unscaleable as ice or glass, are gone save here and there, and soft masses of trees or smiling gardens mask the hill-brows whence of old cannon scowled or picket marched woodenly to and fro. To destroy these great wide works entirely has proved impossible ; their remnants still rise grim and monumental about the tumbled city, like ghosts of tombs. The tattered coat of mail is falling slowly into fragments, the subterranean labyrinths that wedded battery and mine forgotten, but nothing can disguise the wild and rugged mood of nature in the old domain of Siegfried. A modern town has risen upon the ruins of Mars' armoury, but that town straggles on a foundation as savage and as grandiose as the Müllerthal. In the low Grund, where the rivers join, the streets are beetling, narrow and sinuous, the houses dark, old, and decrepit, many standing in the very water, some decked with battered, aged figures in relief ; in the high town are buildings eloquent of Spanish and Austrian glories.

Half city half canyon, part grimace part garden, never was town more difficult to frame in one thought. Vary your point of view, you may have twenty Luxembourgs. It is not a town, it is a tour. "*Je suis chasseur de points de vue*", remarked a French artist-friend to me ; "*et dans ce Luxembourg ce sont inépuisables*". Most of those who are at

the pains to visit the place for its own sake will start from the abominable and porterless station and content themselves with an afternoon's drive round the skull-shaped ramparts which girdle the upper town. But to him who will stay and ramble a week there is no end of curious beauties, of little scenic and antique discoveries, of nooks and groupings and surprises ; everywhere are roses, roses, the flower of Luxembourg ; and night brings her own peculiar graces, when the maze of ravines that entrench the city lies in glimmering darkness, and the lights twinkle from cliff to cliff across the beautiful valley of the Pfaffenthal or cluster starlike about the depths of Grund and Clausen, answering to their image in the steely silent stream.

Here, on the banks of Alzette, are the little house and terraced garden where once Goethe lived. Let me translate his words, written three years before the French Revolution came to break the peace he pictures :—

“ Nothing can wear a face more bizarre than these narrow river-valleys, serpentine between chains of bastions, redoubts, and demies-lunes, an inextricable multitude of fortifications scarce equalled in the history of defence, stretching far out of sight. Here is union of grandeur with grace, of gravity with beauty, such as only a Poussin could reproduce. . . . The parents of my merry guide possessed in the Pfaffenthal a pretty, sloping garden, which they cordially gave me for my use. Near by, the church and cloister justified the name, *Monks' Vale* ; a pledge of peace and rest to the peasant people, though each glance cast upwards recalls war, violence, and ruin. . . . I spent many days in these labyrinths, where art conspires with living rock to cast defiance every way amid the medley of fantastic defiles and softest foliage ; explored all in solitude, pensive, wondering ; returned to record the pictures printed in my mind. Imperfect as they were, they have served to fix the memory of a scene which resembles nothing but itself.”

So looked Luxembourg ; called by Carnot “ *la plus forte*

place de l'Europe après Gibraltar; le seul point d'appui pour attaquer la France du côté de la Moselle."

Of the ancient Palladium of Luxembourg, the fay-haunted Bock with its hollow heart, I must speak a more particular word. The S-shaped town is cloven right across, in a perfect arc, by the railway in a range of four magnificent bridges which span the river thrice. Of these bridges the two midmost are one, leaping in tall slender arches that broad loop of the Alzette which cradles all that is oldest. Across the valley, at the foot of the towering viaduct and side by side with it, runs the little old stone bridge, a giant's off-thrown shoe. The storied Bock, a long black crag which juts out into the loop eastward from the high town, bears the ruins of the castles of Siegfried and John of Bohemia. The former, an outpost of Gallienus, gave its ancient name to the whole abyss of abodes around. Many are the guesses at the name's pedigree: Lucis Burgum, because Apollo was worshipped there, as Arlon, Ara Lunæ, for Diana; Lucilii Burgum, after a Lucilius, Roman occupant of the fortress; Lætorum Burgum, after a Celtic tribe; Elsen-(Alzette) Burg; and Melusinenburg. The likeliest origin is Lützel Burg, Little Castle; the name has been spelt in countless ways; the natives call it Letzelburech. The Bock crag runs out at right angles to the bridges in the centre of the ravine, the river doubling widely round it; the rock is hollow, a rugged monster full of great eyes along its sides, the rough dark windows of the casemates or chambers which honeycomb its whole length; they once bristled with cannon. This historied rock is called by the natives "huolen Zant," Hollow Tooth. Half-way down the rock is the ivied, broken tower, all that remains of Siegfried. On the great arches of the bridge that joins the Bock to the upper town—the root of the tongue which the high town puts out into the low—fairy Melusina, the

valley's pride and glory, is sometimes seen with the golden key in her mouth, the symbol of her guardianship. Around the old rock cluster legends numberless ; Melusina figures always, bound up with the kindly river Alzette, her mystic home and probably her truest interpretation.

Among the gardens of the valley of the Petrusse, at foot of its tremendous viaduct, stands the Chapel of St. Quirinus. It is a little natural grotto in the rock, or hollowed out about the commencement of the third century ; a belfry above it enshrines a Calvary, a carven rock-pulpit stands outside and dominates the valley ; the façade with its slender windows has the legend graven,

A.D. MCCC
L. V. ac. I + VI

that is, Anno Domini 1355 ac Innocentio Sexto. On the lintel of the door is the Cross of the Teutonic Order, whose chevaliers set it there. From the door a rock-cut path leads to the Fount of St. Quirinus, shrined and adorned ; another chapel near contains an old carved wooden group, three virgins seated on a mule, the central figure wearing a bandage on her eyes. These, as at Vianden and Trois Vierges, are the three Hecates, Trivia, Triceps, and Tergemina ; or the three Norns ; or the three Christian Graces. A round rock-cavity in the old chapel, with a gutter leading to a square hewn basin, served once for sacrificial altar and blood-conduit. This claims to be the country's oldest sanctuary. To St. Quirinus' Spring since the tenth century have come pilgrims, every Fourth Sunday after Easter, drinking of the water and bathing eyes therein with mass and prayer, and hearing sermon from the pulpit in the rock. The stone frontal of the altar is as old as the pilgrimage. I ponder amid these rocky walls with their warm and velvety tints, their pied greys and russets and

fawns and olives, by the clear stream-side, upon the rites, strange and dark, which here had place in the sacred wood that shaded this spot before the coming of the Saints ; when of a sudden the sweet sound of the bell stirs me, and looking through the rusty bars of the screen into the chapel's darkness, I see by the quivering light of tapers the people prone upon the earth, an aged priest uplifting the Host above his head. In this Catacomb of " Sanct Grein " the pure Victim has prevailed.

Luxembourg is on the high-road from Ostend to Basle. Yet how many of us know what happens there on the Sunday before Ascension Day, or have heard of Our Lady of Luxembourg ? In 1666 the town, beset with grievous troubles, chose the Blessed Virgin solemnly as its Patron. She was entrusted with the keys, wrought in gold ; clad in cloth of gold and precious stones ; decked with a crown made of the jewels of the Princesse de Chimay, wife of the governing representative of Spain, to the value of nearly ten thousand pounds ; and carried in procession through the streets with mysteries and mummeries of the strangest. This pomp was repeated yearly until the French Revolution. In the year after Waterloo fifty thousand pilgrims camped in the streets, and the market-square was one great confessional. On the famous day the town is a flower-garden, on its night, one blaze. The children in the schools mind their behaviour when the day approaches, for the roses given them vary according to their merit. The kindest child gets the fairest flowers ; I remember a boy given a great red rose, because he refused, like G. Washington, to stretch the truth. Proud as birds of paradise they strut along the streets in the great pageant, some figuring as white, wreathed angels. The holy Image stands on a pedestal, flanked with angels, great tapers, and growing flowers, and fronted with an altar whose

jewelled embroideries sparkle in the sun. Two and two come the children, and with rapid dexterity weave around it, on the ground, a patterned carpet of roses, drawing out exquisite arabesques with a colour-taste and skill of form which are the heritage of generations. In front of the procession marches the "army", a body of police two hundred strong, while students and notaries make strident music. In the evenings of the octave the town is given over to the children, who hold free carnival with tapers and floral chaplets and songs.

The great occasion at Luxembourg is the annual fair, the Schobermesse, on the twenty-fourth of August. That this Kermesse was instituted by John the Blind in 1340, and that it was in old times a matter of immense importance, is authentic history. But the origin of the name is obscure. The two most likely conjectures are *Schober-Messe*, Tent-Fair, and *Schadbare Messe*, Disastrous Fair. The story is that the news of the loss of Crécy and the death of the beloved John of Bohemia reached Luxembourg as the Fair of that year was commencing. The tidings caused such a panic of sorrow that the merchants who had flocked into the town from other countries were obliged to pack up their tents and depart without having sold anything whatever. But the modern Schobermesse is very far from recalling so doleful a Feast of Tabernacles; for man and beast, master and servant and maid and horse and ox and ass are decked out bravely with flowers and ribbons, the houses are in full fig of blossom and bunting, and harmony blends with noise—without suffering by the commixture.

To tell the years and feel the pulse of Diekirch town you had best mount the right bank of the Sûre to the edge of the wood that fringes the hill called Hart. Here, on the wood's margin, like a forest-guarding Titan, stands

the Celt megalith known as Deivelselter, the Devil having left upon it the mark of a cloven-foot. Its great stones, according to constant tradition, formed once the altar of Dido or Dide, not Æneas' friend, but a Celtic deity, grand-daughter of Odin and niece of Thor. After her, they say, the town was called Didekirch. "Quidam enim Didonem eo loco olim in magno cultu fuisse, atque ibi magnificam aram seu templum habuisse ratiocinantur. A qua videlicet dea oppidum Germanico idiomate *Diekirch* Didonis quasi templum nominatur." Thus the Abbé Bertels. On the other side it has been urged that the Druids used for their temples not buildings of stone, but groves; and that Diekirch, as containing the oldest church in Ardenne, the resort of Christians from far and near in the days of the first preachers, was *Die Kirche*—the church *par excellence*. This theory is ingenious, but unconvincing. Unbroken local tradition, tending the other way, counts for much; so too does the name of the mountain at whose foot the town is built—Herrenberg, or Thorenberg in old documents, the Lord's Mount, or Thor's Mount. This massy hill teems with shreds of the old Germano-Gallic faith; on its top, nearly five hundred feet above the Sûre—whence, standing as on a perfect green globe whose sides fall away all round you into emptiness, you may turn upon your heel and count five-and-twenty sparkling villages—there bubbles an exultant spring, perennial, laughing silverly at droughts, which in old war-days filled the fosses of Diekirch after spinning the common town-mill; now it leaps fountain-wise in front of Mr. Nelles-Heck's hotel. This rivulet is called *Bellenflésschen*, from Belenus, Baldur, Belus, Baal, call him what you will, the Sun-god of all faiths, who appears again in Behlenberg and Behlenhof, and probably in Bollen-dorf, the old Villa Bollandæ.

Back to the old towering cairn on the Hart-slope. Like

many another veteran, it fell in 1815—"as the weather pleased". Old people can give an idea of its general appearance before that date, having had it from their fathers. Local antiquarians have set it up again, after such accounts and old drawings; yet I do not feel sure whether Odin's grand-daughter, could she come back, would recognise her shrine. It now appears as a rugged, gigantic, narrow menhir some twenty feet high, built in two piles, having five great hewn stones in each pile, and two immense blocks on top; on the ground are diagonal avenues of recumbent stones. Like Stonehenge and other Druidic work, it is heliometric. Stand facing its arch at summer and winter solstice, and look through; you will see, precisely between the pillars, the rising and the setting sun. If the arrangement be not archæologically above suspicion, as a rockery it is superb. The protective dignity with which it looks down upon Diekirch brings the millenniums home to one's fancy, standing haughtily as it does upon the very edge of the forest; but move away a few hundred paces, and its sad grey fades into the green, is lost to the eye. I notice that upon its topmost edge, from out the bare grey stone, as though no empires had risen and to dust returned, there blooms a solitary little blue flower. Nature minds beautifully her own beautiful business. Her

"sleepless ministers move on,
Labourers that shall not fail, when man is gone."

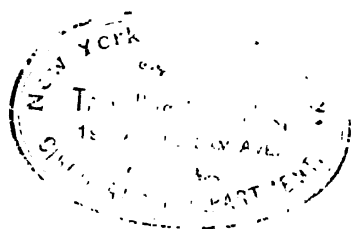
Still, the red-white-and-blue town looks anything but evanescent on this gentle breezy day. Diamond-shaped it is and diamond-bright, set in its *arrière-plan* of little green valleys that intersperse the feet of its possessive hills—Herrenberg, Kaleberg, Seitert, Schutzenberg, Goldknapp, Bamerthal; Kahlenberg from the left down-sloping into its

lap, on the right Herrenberg's more rugged imminence, in front the two-bridged river, bright as glass, rounding it in with a complete, looping curve. From this Dido-vantage the Sûre, most tortuous of rivers, shows herself capable of rectitude ; for to south-east the gables of Ingeldorf—where, at crossing of great Roman roads to Liège, Metz, and Trèves, you can see at low water the piers of their old bridge still—at valley's end just out-top the foliage, and eastwards Saxon Gilsdorf and Bettendorf beyond are courting the sun. It is at first sight a domestic spot, something disappointing, knowing no tincture of antiquity or picturesque distinction, unassuming, far from grandiose. The valley's sweep is shallow, there is little woodland until far up on the yonder hill-chain across the stream a dark frown of forest begins. But when you know this little landscape well enough for converse, its features fall into a very warm and tender symmetry. High opposite, past the snowy hamlet of Burden and little skyey Bourscheid, the distance hazes into purple grape-bloom ; and in the nearer mosaic of sloping culture, the squares of green and red and plum-colour, there is a familiar touch of English downs. Hard by the somewhat garish church is the dark homely spire of St. Laurent, perhaps the oldest of all churches hereabout, discarded and lonely, with its foundations reminiscent of the days when St. Eligius came, the old seat of one of Trèves' five archdeaconries. If you would get at those foundations you must dig ten feet about the Byzantine pillars, so greatly raised was the whole town's level in the eighteenth century.

Caracalla affected Diekirch, if we may draw inference from a beautiful medallion of his, here found. The flanks of Herrenberg are fruitful in vases, urns, and coins. The town's first feudal appearance is as a seigneurie under the house of Esch, fief of the Dukes of Lorraine. In 1221

Robert of Esch makes over to Ermesinde's husband, Duke Waleran of Limbourg, the moiety of the "Justice of Diekirch"; a note of importance. Building the bridge sixty years ago, they found in the river an elaborate seal of that time, inscribed *S. Johan van Diechry*. Forty-five years after Robert, Count Henry Blondel of Luxembourg acquires the other half; the town is by now, therefore, a Luxembourg possession. The erratic John of Bohemia, taken with its beauty, surrounds it with towered walls and fosses, no doubt to keep out the Count of Vianden, his new and uncomfortably-acquisitive vassal. In 1390 Josse of Moravia, holding the duchy as security, granted large communal franchises to the town, with a seal, *Sigilla libertatis in Diekirch*, and, for arms "*burelées d'or et d'azur, au lion d'argent, armé, lampassé de gueules, posé sur un puits du même, maçonné d'argent, mouvant de la pointe sur le tout.*"

So grew Diekirch, and flourished; being capital of a provostry of eighteen villages, ruled by a provost who enjoyed the functions of High Justice, and seven *échevins* appointed by the suzerain, one of whom was yearly chosen as representative at Luxembourg Provincial Council. The town itself was governed by a burgomaster and seven Rottenmeister. The former was appointed by the people for one year, on St. Stephen's Day, when the keys of the town were solemnly handed to him. He must give account of his year's office to the seven *échevins*, and submit all municipal measures to the seven Rottenmeister, who in their turn put it to the vote among the bourgeois. Thus elaborate was the organisation of Diekirch. The bourgeois had the right of hunting over their territory, which proved naturally fruitful of friction with the different Seigneurs in the provostry. The curse of mediæval organisation was not defect, but excess. There was too much of it; it overlapped. "*Nous sommes trop gouvernés*" might have been





DIEKIRCH

[*To face p. 147*]

said with truth. To-day, Diekirch is capital of one of the three *arrondissements* of the country and a centre of advanced education ; its political and social administration are ideal.

The men of Diekirch have always been famed for pluck. They drove out the savage Dutch under Philip of Nassau in 1593, they coolly patched up their fortifications under French fire when Boufflers came ; the fierce Lacroix, installed in Vianden, said, "If you want to master the men of Diekirch, you must cut off their arms and legs". Under French régime at the beginning of the last century the fine old walls were pulled down on the ground of hygiene ; you may trace them by the broad shady avenues that surround the town. Diekirch is jewelled all round with little joys. Not a village along the Sûre but has its quaint little individual interest. Near Gilsdorf the brook Sasselbach, named after the Saxon colonists, finds the river ; track it into the woods, it will talk sweetly to you, show you its delicious cascades. Half-way up Herrenberg slopes grows an old, old willow, christened by some of my French friends "*une merveille de la mécanique*". The tree proper is a hollow half-shell, hardly more than bark and blackened with fire ; round its girth, four of us could not join hands ; its whole heart has been torn out from top to bottom and it has the flimsy look of an upright roll of charred paper with great rents in the sides. This thin gaping cylinder supports three immense branches with their weight of luxuriant foliage, spreading a circle of shade far and wide. But the most wonderful thing is the fourth branch, the real tree, two yards round and solid as the arm of Hercules, growing, six feet from the ground, out of the delicate shell at an acute angle, itself loaded with a world of leafy boughs and hanging over an abyss. One might as well expect to see a hundred-ton cannon growing out of the side of a coil of newspaper : where is the centre of gravity ? The people

say the trunk was once the hiding-place of a desperate brigand-chief: he was besieged in the tree, which was set on fire, and himself burned alive.

I made a sketch of this tree, my three Frenchmen airing the while much Gallic wit at my expense. "*Mais v'la,*" I heard, "*que M'sieur est tout-à-fait Anglais! qu'il est pratique, propre aux affaires! M'sieur voudrait bien, sans doute, acheter cet arbre et l'emporter 'vec lui en Angleterre! Que de justesse; comme c'est caracteristique!*" etc. I congratulate my friends upon the delicacy of the French sense of humour, and my bosom swells with pride to think that I have really reflected credit upon my illustrious nation, merely by making a little drawing of a big tree. There is, again, Erpeldange, with its castle of fair marble sculptures, its pulpit-rock whence Willibrord preached to the heathen, and its opposite grotto, whose kindly gnomes, so good to sufferers and children, are a byword in all the country-side. There is Reisdorf, the angler's paradise, where poor General Clément Thomas lived, until he went back to Paris and the bullets of the Commune; his kindness to the poor, his eccentric figure riding daily into Diekirch, are well remembered; as also his summary way of drubbing naughty *gamins*, which brought him into account with justice not once nor twice.

But what were Diekirch without Monsieur Nelles-Heck, the excellent landlord of the Hotel des Ardennes? M. Nelles is a man of wealth, worth and weight. It may be said that M. Nelles is Diekirch. Indeed, he is more. He is the visible presentment of Grand-Ducality. If His Highness Adolf de Nassau be Omnipotent, M. Nelles is his Demiurge. His is a name to conjure with, the Duchy through. In outlying districts the reverential question, "*S'qu'y a b'coup d'monde à Diekirch?*" suggests Slocum-in-the-Mud inquiring after the Metropole *en plein saison*. M.

Nelles, who is everywhere at the same moment, keeps a charming house, an unexceptionable cellar, and enough of the good old "mine host" spirit to devote himself personally to every one of his guests, even though his hospitable roof-tree should overshadow above two hundred brethren at once. In no English country-house have I felt more individually welcome. Formality is none, merely to be present is an universal introduction, liveliness and laughter reign. Quiet is unknown; but as the desire of quiet is an exclusively British trait, that, where our countrymen are in a small minority, does not matter. Among the German, Belgians, French and Dutch who flock to M. Nelles' genial board, I have many good friends. As to the English contingent, that usually consists of a "General" or so.

I may here mention that I have been very much impressed, in these regions, with the prevalence of "Generals". No one can hope to form any idea of the plethora of "Generals" in the British Army until he has visited the Luxembourg. Every hotel at which I have put up has its "General." They are all precisely alike; all are tall, somewhat sere and yellow, bored, slow of speech but not proportionately rich in ideas. They angle, but seldom kill; display, in sporting stockings, calves which at home would be held better honoured in the breech; seem shrouded in matrimonial mystery but are undisguised in their gay-dog attentions towards the youthful fair sex; speak fearless French with most murderous accent; are ever ready with a final and weighty verdict on all questions human and divine; and invariably head the table, where universal deference is accorded them. "Le Général" is the unconscious subject of much foreign witticism. Once, in a remote hamlet, I thought I had lighted on a hostelry without a "General". But I discovered after a week's stay that there was one there also, who was in bed with measles. On the whole, "the

General" does not contribute much to the charm of further Ardenne.

To return to M. Nelles and his vivacious réunions. The dancing in the evenings when the big tables are cleared away, the polyglot flirtations, the strolls in the river-girt garden of moonlight and roses, endear this resort to youth and maid. The Dutch damsel, to my mind fairest of women after the English, is to be met with here. For myself, I prefer—or elect—the graver *agréments* of billiards, observation, and an occasional chat with my host, who is a Latin scholar, a linguist, an historian, a traveller up-to-date in many scientific paths, a keen reader of every stone and soul and river-reach from his country's end to end, and a man of infinite toil to boot. Yet, like many laborious folk, he is ever *zu Ihrer Verfügung*. When, by October, his six months' toil is done, he is at the disposal of the wild boar; and after summer's fitful fever he shoots well. I esteem him the link between the Luxembourg's old-time rusticity and the world of civilisation. He is wealthy, and could well afford to give me a substantial commission for this panegyric; but I shall not press it. Rambling or angling, unillumined by his counsel, he regards as a piece of deliberate unfriendliness. He reserves for his guests twenty miles of trouty waters in Clerf, Wiltz, Haute-Sûre, Blees, Wark, and White Erenz; many is the one-and-a-half pounder, caught in the brightest weather, we have laid silver-gleaming in the evening on the terrace for the comely girls to pity—and appreciatively eat.

Angling, in these streams, opens on April 1st and closes October 15th. The Sûre is closed from March 25th to June 25th. To get fish needs early rising, skill, patience, and small flies; the water is rapid, but very clear; weather changes, thunder is frequent. Our trout-flies are as killing here as in England at the same seasons; in April and May, however, one

dresses them on larger hooks ; “ March Browns ”, “ Governors ”, and “ Palmers ” on Number Four eyed hooks are about right ; or a small “ Blue-Upright ”, or any red-bodied fly. You had best wear waders. White Erenz, despite the cloth-making refuse, holds the palm for big trout and grayling and for difficult fishing too ; the cause of both being the thickly-wooded banks, guarding the quarry against the poacher and “ honest angler ” alike. But the Upper Sûre too is a beautiful trout-stream, and there are runs near Michelau and Wilwerwiltz where any fool can kill. Coarse fishing is poor, for I believe the native peasant whips to death any waters that offer themselves to his impunity. If you care for pike, barbel, gudgeon, and him whom Isaak’s Venator was chidden for calling “ the worst fish that swims ”—“ *ce vilain Chub* ”—you can get them at the garden’s foot. The fortnightly Thursday “pêche” at Diekirch is curious to see. Members of the Société de Pêche, holding the handles of great nets steeped in the river, raise them over their heads with sudden strong jerk at given signal ; the silvery rain of finny wrigglers that fall on the ground behind them is apportioned among the poor ; the president gets the biggest fish.

CHAPTER VII

TWO CASTLES AND A TALE

OUR Duchy is cloven by a railway running from south to north. Just before this line enters the wild nature-kingdom of Oesling, it begins to take severe advantage of the sinuous valley of the Sûre. For some two leagues it presses the valley into service, where valley serves; breaking tunnel-wise through the towering bases of its three wanton eastering loops—what is man, in art and science, but Nature's righter? and then, when Sûre fairly revolts westward, beating on by grace of more serviceable streams to Ulflingen and the world. As you enter, in the train, the second of these tunnels, you catch a moment's glimpse of a great ruin on the sheer rock high in air. Only for a moment. Then you are whirled into the dark.

This ruin is Bourscheid Castle. For breadth of horizon, for pride of pose and romance of lordship, for space of upland, play of valley and sweep of river, this stately heritage of the strong old time stands untranscended from Kenilworth to Heidelberg. At least, I think so; and I have seen my share of ruins. The tunnel runs right under the eagle's nest. One may fancy stirrings in many a knightly tomb, when bore and mine assailed the rock those guantleted hands had held so long impregnable.

Here the rule of high burg and low hamlet is reversed. Bourscheid Castle has no vassal village looking up for wardship from between its knees. Bourscheid Castle is lifted

high; but Bourscheid Village out-towers it, rides sparkling in cloudland. It is true that Michelau lounges in the valley, stretching limbs of vine and orchard along the levels of the stream; but Michelau wears no Bourscheid livery. Get upon the heights opposite the tunnel and look out across the river; you will see the castle bridling high above the tunnel, and, behind, the village above the castle as high again. And yet the village, scenically speaking, does not overlord the castle in any way. An old grey giant has clapped his goods upon a shelf high above his head and sits daring the despoiler—that is the picture.

The plain truth is that Roman settlers, ever jealous of high prospect places, *épris des hauteurs*, put that village there, nearly sixteen hundred feet above the sea, long before feoffage came to take the lower room. They were higher men than any that came after, and, trusting in their wary eyes, husbanded hands' toil and body's sweat for due occasion. A long mile off, on the same high plain, stands Kehmen; you may trace their strong road from this to that; "Kehmens" always denote such roads, *chemin* is the same word humanised. Bourscheid, Bourg-scheid, the old Gaul-name, is Fortress-Parting; the affix is found all along the line of greatest heights, or water-sheds, marking off the tribal borders of pre-Roman days. Then in their time came the blustering burgraves of the lower height, with their lavish prowess and noisy loves and hates and bloodthirsty sentimentalism; and from their escutcheon the name of the little overhanging thorp, which for more than a millennium had crouched high out of reach of rumour, gleamed in crusade and council, field and joust and court, four hundred years.

Come down now from your yonder vantage, down by the zigzag mountain-road, and look around you. At first, a world of dark undulating rock-land in vesture of shining herbage and heather-bells, high-bordered with the bristling

fir ; a world deep-girdled all across in vast contortion with a stream so devious, so ravelled, that the eye wots not whence it comes nor whither it goes, fails to uncoil its snaky segments into unity. Detail of feature, so far, is lost in largeness. Little by little, as you descend, the picture narrows and the horizons close in till between Michelau's lowly smile and the cold glint of the village on the height Bourscheid Castle looms into ominous focus, cresting with an armoury of spiky wrack its green round mountain-cone. The soaring village is shy of its own eminence, sends down ruinwards a fall of grassy slopes that catch the sun ; all round about a train of swelling hills stands attendant, shadow-veiled. Still winding down, the perspectives change like mirage, village melts, ruin waxes prouder, every step unlearns the last ; a pillared Madonna by the wayside hints of Michelau, mossy thatch and honeysuckle attest it ; then, the long low valley-carpet, the level decorous river with red oxen wading ; the sleepy *pat, pat*, of women washing clothes in the river ; sunny Michelau lolling half-awake across the stream, an angler leaning from the bridge, the sugar-loaf-spired church atop of a high white wall, the flowering churchyard, the cassocked curé pacing breviary in hand among the roses, church and parsonage trellised with vines ; the quaint, pure graciousness which Ardenne farmsteads wont.

But let us press the other way across the railway-bridge, for the path that winds up the mountain is full long and steep. Beguile the way with necromancy ; raise the lordly ghosts of Bourscheid. Think that they troop down this way, spurring past you, steeds prancing, accoutrements flashing in this rampant sun, vizors, lances, chain-mail all one gleam. Whether the fiefs are gathered for some festive scene, the wedding of Lady Ermesinde, the inaugural pomp of Henry the Fifth, the will-making of Wenceslas, the triumphal entry of Philip the Good ; or whether some high act

of suzerain be pending, as the chartering of the Abbey of Munster, the enfranchisement of Echternach or Luxembourg, the alliance of Henry the Fourth with the Duke of Lorraine, or the Count of Vianden's oath of fealty; or whether fatherland must be fought for, died for, as upon the fields of Trèves, Liège, Namur, Ciney, at the battle of Bouvignes, in the bloody agony of Agincourt; or whether lists of princely tourney, at Cologne, Worms, Ingelheim, call for vulture eye and artful arm; or whether haunts of God are to be purged of the trail of paynim in far Palestina; or whether there be quest of life to be laid down for liege prince or overlord, as upon the day of Woeringen, of Crécy: these lairds of Bourscheid are there, win in life the meed of chivalry and counsel, the palm of devoir done in death. Through Luxembourg story the line of Bourscheid weaves itself like a strong scarlet cord. But in the sixteenth century the bright tapestry shudders into grey, the shining threads ravel and are broken; and the Seigneurie of yonder height has passed into the hands of the house of Metternich. I do not know who was at home here when Boufflers called. But the ignoble fact remains that the manor-gates were thrown open at the first volley, so that Bourscheid escaped sacking until the Terror. After that last, the reverend old demesne was knocked down to one of the many carrion-birds that rose with last century on mangled Europe, who dealt with it as did Walhausen with Esch and Coster with Vianden—broke it up, sold it piecemeal for six thousand francs. All the old lairs came to rack in this un-knightly way; ostensibly, by honest shot and shell; actually, at the hands of a Judas.

“Lust of glory pricked their hearts up, dread of shame
Struck them tame;
And that glory and that shame alike, the gold
Bought and sold.”

This climb, say the feet, is a toilsome coil ; it is at the same time, answers the eye, a spiral of widening apocalypses. Mountains, of late, encompassed us, and we gave them reverence ; now, how much more august the world of plains, north, south, east and west, that rise behind them ! We are of that world, the great gulf fixed is but a disparting accident. At last, a little cabin, two babies minding goats, a round beetling tower. The babies produce a key ; the key unseals an inferno. Look down from this deep-fissured donjon, from amid these yawning *souterrains*, these wide heaps of débris embedding carven capital and arch-fragment of fairest moulding, from between the mullions of these isolated windows and the cracks in these escutcheoned hearth-places ; you might fancy that four rivers went out to water this garden, so dazingly does the Sûre multiply itself in curves and doublings. Stand by this tall chimney of the Rittersaal, where once spurs clanked, cloth of gold rustled, gems sparkled, beakers rattled, feuds were sworn—

“O heart ! O blood that freezes, blood that burns !”

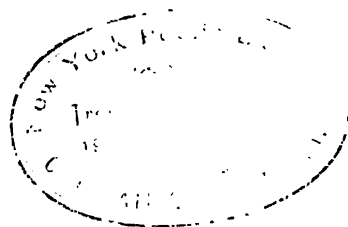
the whole long fronting gorge, from distance to distance, is the river's own. Half turn to the left, peer through that turret's ivied embrasure ; the river has a second thought, is come back from earth's end to lave the mountain's feet. Walk round by that gap in the battlements behind ; there, as ever, the river flirts away, as ever to return. Northward Lipperscheid closes the long loop of waters ; southward, amid the sea of wavy table-lands, one great green billow upbears Bürden against a cloud.

There, withinside the gateway, are the little goatherds, waiting ; they have brought a goodly tome, bound in oak and pigskin, clasped with iron and wonderfully foul ; it lies open on the rampart-edge. Take a look through this book. It is a remarkable medley ; a manuscript register, half parch-



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ment half paper, of the household accounts of the family of Bourscheid from the fourteenth century onwards; with pasted letters here and there from sires of Beaufort, Brandenbourg, Esch; archives embedding names of kings and queens, statements of timber-sales, registers of births and deaths and more intimate domestic matters, a great painted pedigree-tree of the family of Metternich, and heaven knows what besides. On the blank pages you may descry many a notable name; here is the signature, in thick black sprawl, "*Victor Hugo: To be or not to be; 22 Août 1870.*" What was the poet meditating, in that quotation? It would be good to edit, that book; full of interest, casting light upon many times. Your name inscribed at chubby finger's instance, and the babies rewarded, you turn to go. A glance backwards reveals the children tumbling the book about upon the grass, Metternich's proud tree sprouting from the edges, dog worrying cover in frantic glee. That strange old chronicle will not be edited.

It is a sparkling Sunday afternoon, and they are fairing noisily at Diekirch. After the big foolish midday dinner they can do it; but sleep fans me insidiously with misty wing. Virtue prevails; I arise manfully, and break the spell—Brandenbourg! That wantonest of trout-streams, Blees—By-laes, Little River—shall be guide; Blees, that tumbles a thousand feet, all told, in her whisking, sidling, eight-mile-life, and hides herself coyly under stones when the sun is hot, and has been known to play sad pranks on occasion, but in her clear heart praises God with the best.

Now this Blees, falling into the Sûre, helps her to girdle that horseshoe mountain, the Herrenberg; which headland, therefore, must be doubled. The little train, so characteristic of Diekirch, that forges along the road ringing a continuous bell, is good for a mile of Sûre and another of Blees;

then I alight and turn aside up the valley, while the train-thing goes chiming consequentially off among the trees to Vianden. Through this green-gold hay-and-honeysuckle-breathing afternoon the low valley marches me broad and straight to Bastendorf, *te duce, Blasa*—always saving the sinuousness of the latter's gait, whose happy laughter reels from side to side flickering like a beautiful Bacchante coiffed with flowers. A few drowsy labourers, in Sunday's despite, are pottering in the fields ; here are two profane oxen, hitched to a hay-load ; the driver, crooning *Ave maris Stella* in a prone doze high on the hay, dreams aloud that he is no Sabbath-breaker. A little white cemetery, Christ, supreme in a kingdom of hollyhock and sunflower, sleeping on the cross ; then Bastendorf, a score of snowy homesteads, vaunting a spire. Hamlet snoozes, folded in the light, spire is the finger, pointing the reason. Past the church, whence catechism is droning, the brook stretches itself out gladly unwound from tangle of service, the valley goes on as before ; but if you be Nature's friend, you will see all changed. The equator-line between sandstone and schist, between new Gutland and old Oesling, cleaves Bastendorf. You have just stept out of the sea upon the shore. Behind you, long ago, lapped the warm shallows where the saurian took his bath ; before, lay the beach up which he floundered in the sun to dry him. There is a difference that may be felt ; summer and the sun still regnant, but earth's smile has grown severe, the valley narrows and deepens, the air sharpens, the home-feeling has gone out of things. Blees cares no more than children care dancing on old graves, is humoursome above as below, though her bed is as different as buckram from swansdown ; only comes down with something more of consequence, body-guarded with tall poplars like a gay little princess tripping past files of sentinel. The wooded heights grow into mountains ; presently, a long grassy oval,

and at end, supreme in the gap, Brandenburg's dark ruin on its cone, strong, square, gigantic, a threatening phantom throned among high fells.

No fief of Luxembourg bespeaks such power, such strong-seated lordship, as this great swaggering manor Brandenburg, straddling all over its mountain with grim square of double ramparts and bull-necked towers. Your Rhine has nothing grislier. Once I saw it when its mountain was swathed in white mist, a fairy castle hanging in the air. The lords of this place were scions of the comital house of Vianden; the first was Godfrey, son of Frederick, first of Vianden's hereditary counts; and from twelfth century onwards the name of Brandenburg held high place in all valorous and stirring phases of Luxembourg history. For pride of racial honour, noble alliance, doughty deeds, few were their rivals; renowned in crusade and list and field, impregnable at home and indomitable abroad, woe wait on him who should cast slight upon their banner! When Antony of Burgundy, Duke of Brabant (who fell at Agincourt), claimed the Duchy of Luxembourg as an unredeemed pledge by virtue of his marriage with the pawnbrokeress Elizabeth of Goerlitz, proud Sir Godfrey of Brandenburg, with other doughty nobles, would none of it. The prince tried diplomacy, but was forced to carry his claims by the sword. Many of these sky-pitched strongholds welcomed him with hot lead, antique offal, and other confetti. The patriot knights were brought under at last, several castles being taken and razed. But Brandenburg Godfrey held out like a dog to the end. They came and threw up redoubts against the ravines that parted his castle on either side from the mountains and gave him such a battering and storming that he stepped out on the ramparts and surrendered under protest. One is glad to think that they treated him with consideration afterwards.

In 1628 the Duke of Lorraine, who had married a daughter of the house, sold it out of the family. Then, later in the century, Louis XIV. cast his eyes on Luxembourg, the Gibraltar of mid-Europe, and worked for it in blood and fire twenty years. Cleverly he sent that man of iron, Boufflers, ravaging through the country at the nobles' gates, to draw them from the defence of the capital. This savage marshal traversed the land like a baleful comet with a tail of smoke and tears. The county families were given no notice of his visits; a baron might be at breakfast, or taking an afternoon's sleep, when the sentinel would come in breathless from the tower to announce a blockade, the boom of cannon punctuating his words. Most of the old strongholds, deemed so long impregnable, fell down like ninepins when French powder was brought to bear. Many disappeared without leaving one stone upon another to mark the site; others, in course of time, draped their battered limbs with lichen and ivy, and became what people call "picturesque". Nobody knows exactly what constitutes the "picturesque", but everyone agrees that dilapidation of some sort is essential to it. Brandenburg was one of these last. Boufflers was an unconscious artist in black, whose brushes were howitzer and culverin; a sort of big Philippoteaux. The poor cottager, who lived between the hammer and the anvil, sat in trepidation, dodging the balls that came down his chimney and the bits of castle that found ingress through his mossy roof. Now, by a curious irony, his posterity pocket the French francs of French gazers upon French havoc, making to themselves friends of the unrighteousness which undid their masters.

Nothing could bring back the old times more vividly than that double arc of little blue-and-white cabins, their foundations as old as the castle, which fringe the mountain-

base ; the inner—you might come a score of times and never see it—crouching to the rock, the outer penning the inner at hand's breadth. The hamlet is poor, its dwellings nervously crowded ; shut in between the mountains, it has a close, malarious look ; but there is a smile of contentful little gardens where the brook flows in, and the heliotrope-coloured cottages are bright in every window with dahlias, fuchsias, roses. Above, the ruin is a colossal stone casket of tall and slender fir-trees. Up past the little church it is a toilsome climb to where the great churlish gateway, with a Triton-and-bull-and-fish Roman relief let in among its stones—was Godfrey an antiquarian ? frowns me all the way down again in search of the key. To every house in this tiresome quest of the key, which comes to light at last from the depths of an urchin's pocket. Within, all is fir-trees, under the broken arches of the knight's hall, on the crumbling ramparts, in my lady's chamber. I pass through two vast enclosures, between entire walls more than twenty feet high by eye-measure, where seigneurial lodge, keep, and donjon send up towering remnants that tempt the wind ; and emerge upon a little green terrace velvet-soft, abutting on a round battlement—the nose of the sheer precipice. On a sudden, the full sweep of the goodly valley that brought me, the dark eastward slopes of broom deigning in gracious bows to the sun-washed grass, the opposing western bays rolling down shadows to shadows, the long procession of poplars walking in majesty, attending the stream out of sight ; the radiating westward gullies carpeted with emerald under the declining sun ; the deep-shaded glen where the Mullenbach leaps down singing into the Blees ; the play of the mossed roofs as they curl into the raying ravines ; and behind, up here among the fir-boughs, this gaunt world of wrack, defying, proud in decay as in peopled splendour, the tooth of time.

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Rêverie, pipe, and sketchbook hold me here in happy durance, until the splashes of gold light are gone from the valleys, and a canopy of rose-shot lilac blazons the bedding of the sun. A lonesome undertone has crept into the swell of the stream, the dainty-footed goats are following the children down the slopes ; Solitude comes stalking up from the ruins with conscious hand for my shoulder, and Impulse, upstarting in the innermost, bids me go. Quite quietly, as always, I obey Impulse ; for the fruit of disregarding or quenching Impulse, is sin.

Male Brandenburg is playing bowls. It is good to see some of these grave peasants accounting for six pins at one shot. Their cannoning is the poetry of statics, would win them honour, reduced to the scale of the green cloth. My own efforts are depressing, but not altogether bootless, for they woo the stolid faces to a smile of no inconsiderable latitude. In the little estaminet at the foot of the mountain unexceptionable cutlets, with rough Moselle wine, graced by the surrounding family, raise content to the power of optimism. Before I had done chattering with that goodwife and her brood, I saw Brandenburg, socially and mythologically, to the end of truth's spectrum and far beyond it. This is a chimerical people, and their conversation is in borderland ; indeed, they do not seem to be conscious of any border. Fact and fantasy, in the crucible of their credulity, are melted down together, run into one mould. But in the matter of air-drawn tales one must draw the line. I may perhaps be permitted to edit here just one folk-conceit that formed a theme of talk that evening.

In the woods round Brandenburg, as in other parts of the Moselle valley, thin mysterious sounds are sometimes audible at night to those that have ears to hear : the hubbub of a hunt, the blare of horns, the shouts of a troop, the chime of hounds in full cry. It is the Chasseur-Errant. I

append his "cautionary story", as Jane and Ann Taylor would call it, for the warning of those who do not go to church on Sunday and other wicked persons.

Otho, Count of the Palatinate, lived in the tenth century. He was a mighty hunter, but not before the Lord, for he loved the cry of the hounds more than the chant of the priest, and to follow after the hind rather than righteousness. One Sunday in autumn, ere the young sun had gilded the dome of the Cathedral of Trèves, this reckless prince, mounted on a steed of mettle and followed by a band of merry huntsmen, started for the chase. The great forests of Eifel rang again with the joyous blasts of the horn, and the loud "Hallali ! Hallalo !" made havoc of the Sabbath calm and scandalised many a mass-going goodwife terribly. The gay cavalcade broke out into the open, and lighted on a place where three roads met. From opposite directions there came spurting towards them two cavaliers. The one on the right was a youth of sweet countenance, mounted on a white horse ; a goodly proper knight was he ; his fair curls fell upon his shoulders, and a white mantle, broided with gold, revealed his sparkling habergeon. The rider on the left, a man of sinister mien, bestrode a horse black as night ; over a black pourpoint he wore a cloak of scarlet, on bonnet a scarlet plume ; from his eyes glowed the infernal fire. Lord Otho saluted the pair, and invited them to join his train. "Noble Count," replied the white knight, "hear you not the bells that summon you to divine service ? It is the hour when the chants of men mount up to join the canticles of angels ; the hour of praising the good God ! Since the creation of the world He has sanctified the day of praise. Come, then, bend the knee before His altars ; or tremble—for heaven's vengeance overhangs his head, who causes the faithful to offend !"

"The devil, young sir !" cried Otho in scorn ; "you

preach like an apostle, but you knock at deaf ears. Mine humour jumps not with homilies to-day ! ”

But here the other struck in, “Forward, Count of the Rhine ! Let the bells burst their throats, and the churls go a-massing ! The kingly chase shall be our mass, the sward our altar, the hind our Host, the Hallali our Alleluia ! ”

“Well reded, brave gossip ! ” replied the Count with a great laugh in his beard. “I choose thy counsel. Forward ! *Frisch darauf los ! Hallali, Hoaho !* ”

And at that word the whole cavalcade sprang forward, over the fields, through the fosses and the ravines, up the mountains and down again. And all the while the two strange riders rode at the Count’s side, the white on his right hand, the black on his left.

Suddenly a hart, white as snow from antler to hoof, appears in the distance, flying out of the brake before them. Horn winds, hunt maddens, hot chase presses hard. Nothing is sacred ; death and destruction are in their wake. Harvest is trampled, beast and fowl are trodden underfoot ; prayers of tiller and herdman count for wind as they pass. And still, as Lord Otho heads the cortége, the two bear him company, on his right and on his left.

The quarry flags, slackens pace ; flecked with blood and foam, he enters a wood where a little chapel bespeaks a hermitage. On, on presses the barbarous rout, but the hart has found sanctuary at last ; he has gained the chapel, stands panting before the altar of God. The hermit, his white hair flouting the sun, forbids the door with stern uplifted hand. The fair Knight pleads with Otho, the dark makes mock at his plea ; again the Count leans to the ill counsel, brandishes his hunting-knife with a blasphemy, is for hurling the old man from his path.

When all at once the ground reels, the day darkens, and





BRANDENBOURG CASTLE

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a clap of thunder, terrific as though heaven and earth were come together in one crash, arrests the sacrilege. The Count finds himself alone ; his companions, his pack, the chapel, all are gone ; the shouts of the hunters, the music of the hounds, stifled in a sudden silence. He calls, but no sound issues, he sets his horn to his lips, it is mute. Then an appalling flash of lightning rends the darkness, and from the jaws of the loosened hurricane falls the judgment of Heaven :

“Thou hast reviled God and set light by His service, hast had compassion neither upon man nor beast, hast dared to brave the anger of the Most High. Flee, then, thou—be thyself the quarry of devils until the consummation of the world !”

And since that day, over hill and dale, over champaign, lea, and river, through field and forest the miserable wraith, all hell at his heels, flees like a thin wind by day and by night ; has been seen scudding over the moon-flooded hill-crests, down the shadow-dark slopes of the valleys ; behind him, the hideous flying shapes that ever greet his bursting eyeballs, as he looks back in anguish over his shoulder ; before him, perdition, despair, the inhospitable void ; a living death of horror here, hell's sure and certain hope hereafter.

With such wealth of nursery-lore to soothe their children to sleep, need we wonder to find the Luxembourggeois a God-fearing, Sabbath-keeping people ? “*Concava per vallis veni, trans alia recurram.*” The way back lies over a high wooded plateau, subtending the angle of my coming. A very kind good-bye, a Parthian shot anent the ghostly huntsman, and I cross the bridge and mount long and long ; and star by star comes handmaiding the moon, and distance swings out from behind distance, until Brandenbourg Castle doffs its scowl and becomes a silver-grey cairn of stones in a sombre bottom, quite abashed amid the encircling council of the

hills. A single light twinkles far in the thorp below ; all other lamps are heaven's, for unseen hands are lighting them all round the deepening dome of the world. The breath of pines is on the air. Silence, but for the mewing owl ; stillness, save that the bat's blind lurchings bar-sinister the blue-green sky. Then, a sudden turn, a pitch-black grove of pines, and—nothingness.

CHAPTER VIII

TWO CASTLES AND A CONTRAST

ESCH-IN-THE-HOLE was once cut off from the world. Nothing but a bird could reach it, unless one approached by a difficult path from across the mountains, leaping from rock to rock like a goat. Nothing on wheels could enter Esch or leave it. In this Thule among villages the advent of a stranger was an unwonted thing, like a visit of Tsar or Kaiser to London, and caused, in proportion, as much excitement. The world went on without Esch, and Esch, being self-sufficing, did not put itself out.

But the engineer has come forward and let the world into Esch. Esch lies buried in a walled nook of the Sûre, and the high-road from Wiltz to Ettelbrück runs past this hiding-place and comes quite close to it at one point. Walking along the road at this point you would never fancy the beautiful river, in her grandest and fairest mood, was sweeping past the other side of the great mountain wall that flanks your level way. What the engineer has done is to bore a tunnel through the forty yards of this screening cliff; and it is very obliging of him, for it has made Esch, which is particularly worth seeing, comfortably possible if you will walk the six charming miles or so of mountain road from Wiltz railway-station. Grope your way through this rough oozing rocky hole and you emerge into vastness. Not yet Esch, but its *avant-propos*, prototype; what Esch

would be, if masterful man had never pitched there his grim stone tent ; Nature's witness, to shame Esch.

For here Nature has her castle, her fastness, and her moat ; a round and great mountain, with a perfect circle of river bathing its base in a perfect bay of cliff, and you in mid-sweep opposite at half-height. This wide circus is like some old Ptolemaic or Norse picture of the universe ; above, all blue heaven, below, this round Midgard-serpent of river ; facing you, the top half of the planet that has it to belt ; in your ears, a cascade-song, the music of the spheres. By the time you have rounded the curve, you find that the seeming globe, just where the waterfall meditates its ceaseless lay, springs from the wall of a valley which leads round right-wards. The opposite height becomes sublime, long clere-stories of black fir-trunks colonnade with gloom its lighter mural spaces, a chapel half-way to heaven looks down to close the world of things.

But there are many worlds ; and round this corner Esch is waiting, as it were to spring on you. Through the first beauty of it there thrills a shudder, for the river seems to be flowing towards you out of a crater, and the crater's self is under the dominion of a black scowl in stone. Amid the rocky heaps of Esch the past would seem to have left a legacy of malediction. Here all is black, bleak, bizarre. At the bottom of a circular well whose walls are towering rock the hamlet cowers, unbearing its supercilious incubus, the melancholy crumbling lair of the once-potent lords of Esch. And the lair itself has the air of variance with itself. Two hulking sombre towers threaten each the other, darkening the warmest sunshine ; a round tower, hanging as in space, and a square tower, war-battered, with a giddy serrated gap between them. It were hard for a Hugo to picture anything more grim than this silent feud between a cylinder and a cube. Once a pontlevis bridged the abyss ; these spiders

wove strong webs. Beyond the square tower, on its own lowering, arid rock-base, crouches a sullen following of ruins. The rock with all that pertains to it has the air of a thing rough-hammered by some Thor or Vulcan, half-charred in a primeval fire. It is Tartaric, Doresque. The haphazard village seems a misshapen monster, emerged from the river with dripping feet, climbing painfully the chaos of black upright strata that sullenly uphold the ruin ; it crowds around the old church, raised high as though the throng of black-tiled houses uplifted it from the ground in prayer to their gaunt fetish. I have seen this picture outlined against blue-black vapours, when from the valley behind there swept up the purple pageant of the storm ; and to see it so, or to see it blindingly by lightning, is to shiver. After rain the dark rock is shot with strange prismatic colours here and there ; but when snow enshrouds all, and the river is silent in its rocky channel, and the sky rests, a rayless leaden dome, upon cold and sallow horizons, then Esch might serve for Nifelheim. Under the round tower a single arch spans the stream, and St. John Nepomucenus guards it woodenly from his sentry-box against the murderous crag.

Down on the bank a third tower, broken off short and moss-capped, lifts its beheaded trunk out of the house-roof it serves for buttress. Cross the bridge and climb the rocky street, past the church with its wooden clock-face and niched dolls, to the desolate and barren area of the ruins. From middle height you look down, the other side, upon the exact reverse of the picture, the same bridge, the same outward curve of river ; to your right, the end of Esch, the quite perfect apse of rock in whose chord, like the altar in a basilica, Esch lies deep. Here in the midst, the ruin might well be the haunt of satyrs ; it is certainly a repository of filth. A herd of young Hooligans from

the village comes scaling the rock-steps, mounting the rickety landings of the tower, shouting and grimacing in the broken sanctuary of the chapel. The scene is fascinatingly repulsive; no antiquarian indignation comes at call. The great round tower on inspection proves to be cracked from top to base, with a lively oak-tree, probably the divider, luxuriating in the fissure. Some thirty years ago this ruin was a Ghetto of most miserable beggars, who hacked holes for themselves in the keep and huddled in the wretched darkness of the dungeons, pariahs even from the society of the village below. He who lived in the vaults was called *Scheiër*, local patois for that part; he who crept into the oven was called *Bakès*, and so forth. In course of time the real names were lost, and the nicknames, turned into surnames, are borne in Esch to this day by men and women who came to the birth in these damp and day-lorn hovels.

It is strange that this poor little hamlet of a few hundred souls was once a prosperous commune, a busy hive, a little Verviers, famed for cloth-work; stranger still that the old Lorraine-sprung lords of Esch—once Asche or Easch—were from the eleventh century among the Luxembourg's most powerful nobles, owning allegiance to the emperor only, their domains including five-and-twenty dependencies and reaching to Diekirch; exercising Justice High, Middle, and Low, and sometimes on a scale startlingly original. The first of them, Henry of Esch, with his son Godfrey, went with Godfrey de Bouillon to the First Crusade; won honours at the siege of Nicea, at the taking of Antioch, at the siege of Jerusalem. The Esches do not seem to have been popular on their estates. During the minority of Count Henry VII. the county was troubled by a sedition, which sprang out of the detestation of the people for the insufferable Godfrey of Esch, president of the council of regency. Things were so hot for a time that the Countess

found it expedient to make a five months' stay at Marienthal Convent. However, the tumult was pacified, and the unacceptable Godfrey came off triumphant with a levy of three thousand Trevirian livres, which he extorted from the rebels. The glory of the house was short-lived, for male heirs were lacking to Godfrey, and the seigneurie passed through a succession of different hands and fizzled out.

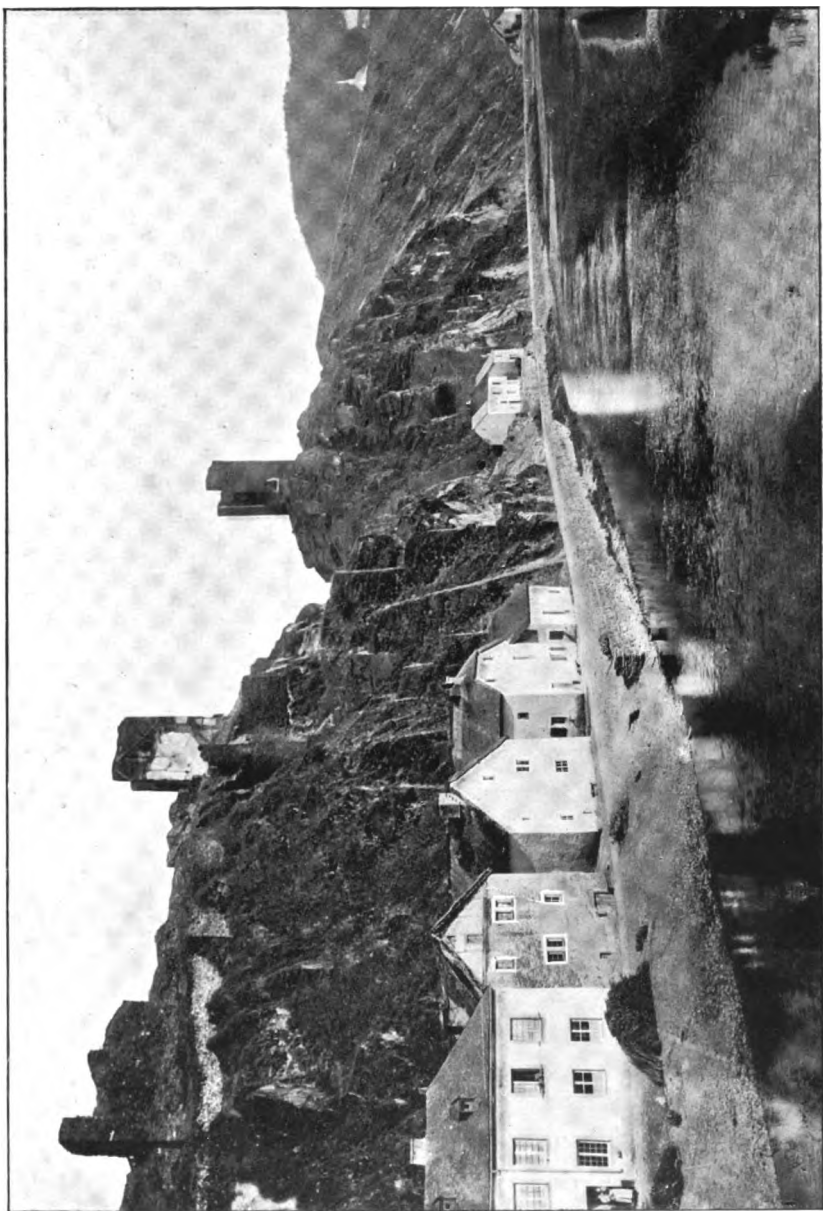
Formerly the villagers must tramp three miles to high Eschdorf upon great feast-days to church, a bad trudge when snow lay thick and sleet was biting. There has been suffering here; fire, famine, and the French have raged not once nor twice. But work is life to the men of Esch; they have recovered themselves, and their tunnel, the first road they have ever seen, has given them a new lease of life. Near Esch is a little chapel, which witnesses to their energy and thrift. The story is that formerly, upon the site, there was a statue of St. Anne in a niche of the rock. A pious lady-client of that Saint willed her whole fortune in trust for the building and decoration of a chapel on the spot where she had so often prayed. The will was read, and the estate was found to consist of three goats. The trustees took this capital in hand, and administered it so well that in quite a short time the three goats had swelled to three hundred. So there—agreeably to both senses of the word *Capella*—stands the pretty little shrine.

Not three miles to the north of Esch is another small wayside sanctuary most famous, St. Pirmin's Chapel; a shrine upon the height, six feet square, containing two basins full of water. The water comes from a spring hard by; it is far-famed as curing children of rickets and scrofula. Twice yearly, on Whitsun Monday and on St. Mary Magdalene's Day, a priest comes to bless the spring, and with him a crowd of pilgrims, who dip their children in

the water and afterwards place a wooden cross against the wall. The local faith in this miraculous water is impregnable. Is a child afflicted with stomach-ache? "it has the Pirmin", say they—and off it must go to be plunged. The origin is lost in the long-ago. But a priest told me that the Roman Fontanalia used to be celebrated on this mountain, and the spring venerated. Then came Danish Saint Pirminus, preaching the gospel and healing the sick in Austrasia and Lorraine, and garbed the rite in a Christian dress. Once, a peasant came in the night and stole the statue of the Saint from its niche. At every step it grew heavier, until he could carry it no longer. Then he repented, and took it back.

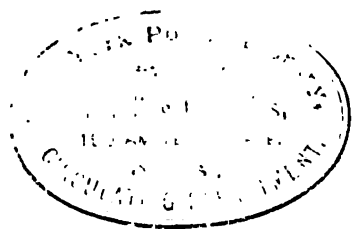
The last time I was at Esch, it was Kermesse day. Work was off, quiet reigned; pretty fair-haired girls with full-laced bosoms and swains in velvet coats bold of buttons passed and repassed in the street, eyeing each other shyly. Towards four in the afternoon the whole village began to group itself about the door of the inn; it was time for the departure of the daily *malle-poste* for Goebelsmühle. The diligence was standing there; its brake, in view of steep descents, was padded with an old boot, of incredible size, on either side. I have frequently read of "the boot" as forming a part of old coaches, but this was a new interpretation. Presently the ruddy, cheery driver appeared. While he was harnessing the powerful horses fifteen persons, including myself, got somewhat precipitately into that diligence, and also much merchandise. Then, amid laughter and many hand-wavings, we started.

When we had made three hundred yards, three more persons climbed up. Further on, another couple insisted on mounting, and room was cheerily found for them. The like continued to happen until that diligence, which was built to seat ten, contained, or in some delicate equilibrial sense sub-



ESCH-LE-TROU

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tended, twenty-five persons. Most of them were of full bodily habit, and they were all sitting down. I had not thought that human beings could sit down, respectively, on so little. Everybody was cheerful and good-humoured. I make no manner of doubt that as many again, had they presented themselves, would have been welcomed into, or upon, or around that bulging vehicle with equal airiness. For myself, I was sitting on, or as nearly so as the sixteen boots behind the small of my back and the twelve on my head permitted, the driver's footboard, with my legs suspended between the horse-chains and the pole. The mountain-road had on its right side, most of the way, a sheer precipice of several hundred feet, commanding the wild and beautiful windings of the Sûre and its valley; and often, while descending a steep gradient, quite doubled round a corner. At such a point, the hinged pole naturally described a very acute angle with the cross-bar beneath me, from which it sprang. My feet accordingly seemed somewhat superfluous, and had to be withdrawn; which operation, seeing that my body—from the part with which I was, in the courteous sense, sitting, to my head—was at an angle of forty-five degrees to the plane of the horizon, involved a dilemma not untinctured with peril. I was thus in a position favourable neither to taking notes of the beauties of the route nor to participation in the amiable converse of the people on the roof and wheels.

That diligence reached Goebelsmühle (eight miles) in safety, with all hands. The driver demanded a mark for my "place". I was so taken with this pleasantry that I insisted upon his accepting two.

Just before the Sûre takes that southward dip in its unaccountable hurry to reach ugly Ettelbrück, there springs up from it into the Ardenne a figure like the letter "Y" scrawled by a child just learning to write. The up-stroke

of the "Y" is two married streams, the branches are the streams virgin—the Wiltz and Clerf, which are dotted with the two towns named after them. Our business is with the Clerf. It is as serpentine as a stream can be. No Grand-Ducal torrent wriggles more industriously in baby imitation of Lady Sûre ; the railway rides roughshod and stern by bridge and tunnel through the middle of its pert sinuosities, crossing it ten times in three miles, until the more dignified Wiltz, overtaking it at Kautenbach, conducts it gravely for the remaining league into the custody of the greater stream. But the road, following more sympathetically the maze, reaps reward of the exquisite little valley this Meander has carved for itself. Now calm, now rapid in its Protean bed of beauties, the Clerf puts on brave vesture of sweeping forest to enchant his eyes who tracks it to Clervaux.

Here is the region of Oesling, mountainous, large, romantic, inspiring. Here all is different from the gentler southern champaigns, for Earth-Mother shows a sterner bosom. These are the hills and pine-forests that nursed the sturdy peasants who for the right to be called men fought the French to the death. Of this brave pathetic struggle the cradle and the arena was Clervaux. It is not hard to fancy it, for here one breathes a sharper, a more Doric air.

Here on this lofty vantage-ground of the Kloppelkrieg monument to which I have mounted, and which stands over against the entire apocalypse of Clervaux as the Mount of Olives stands over against Jerusalem, all outlines define themselves with a stereoscopic clearness. It is *Clara Vallis*. To look, first down into the pitchy dark of the fir-wood that falls away from my feet into the side-depth, then to lift eyes upon the opposing round green chair of Clervaux, in whose low recess she sits lucent and a queen ; is to sing at heart, "*O lux et tenebræ, benedicite*". Hardly liquid Baïæ could more serenely shine. Between Clervaux and Esch-le-Trou

there is a difference only pointed by their likeness. Both are profoundly embayed in the same faultless crescent of river and mountain, both swarm around the same war-splintered, central castle-crowned crag with its transverse ravine and veteran ruin ; both lie in a crater, each is approached from this side and from that by a long parabola of sweeping valley. Yet in all this kinship what a feud ! Esch is darkness, Clervaux is light ; Esch scowls, Clervaux smiles ; Esch is naked, Clervaux is clad with tender various green ; Esch is chaotic, Clervaux symmetric ; the one ruin is to its girdling village a disarmed, malignant tyrant, the other is a kindly, pensioned patron ; Sûre is Esch's strangling serpent, Clerf is Clervaux's jewelled zone.

Here is that peculiar charm of Ardenne village-nests, a brood of curves in the arms of a mother-curve. The long rough tongue of living rock that slopes away to the midst until beyond the breach it stands erect in the mossed castle's white and gold, is acquitted of its brusqueness by the tender polychrome of roofs whose play of arc on arc besets it like young locks around a venerable brow. Amongst the houses lying in a deep trench around the castle-height, the street curves with the river's curve ; up the yonder height there runs, curving with the road, a single curve of gleaming homesteads ; to the south the stream, light in love as a flirting bee, straightens the amorous arm it has folded round the village and leaps away with a laugh to woo fresh hamlets with its opal wantonness, but none so sweetly as Clervaux ; and accompanying with it a single line of rail, that note of human thought which often rather makes than mars the harmony of landscape, cleaves the valley straight as an arrow's flight to bury itself in the rock's black heart. But opposite, in that great throne of the cliffs, are no straight lines. All is soft, blended, like the blended sounds that float upward to this peaceful beacon of the hills ; the lowing of far-off oxen,

the bird-chatter, the faint bell, the river's gentle rhyme, all merged like the long muffled chime of a cowrie-shell.

Turn round, and there, towering above you, is a tall column—the monument of this Kloppekrieg, Peasants' War. It is a proud trophy on a proud height, and the pride is justified by the story. Be it recalled that our versatile neighbours across Channel, when in the hottest of their decide-regicide mood they had sacked Luxembourg town and annexed the surrounding country as part of the "Forest-Department", took instant measures to reduce its inhabitants to a condition compared with which feudal vassalage had been gospel liberty. Not only were Church properties sold by auction, convents suppressed, Sunday abolished, religion practically penalised, but every adjunct of the ordinary life of a human being was taxed till the beggar was envied as the only man that had a sou in his pocket. An angry murmur began to seethe through the Ardennes, which only waited the favourable moment to break out into the shout of mutiny. The moment came in 1798, when the Convention issued the conscription-decree which was to scatter the sons of the poor as targets over all the battle-fields of Europe. The fires of revolt broke out at the same instant in half-a-hundred places; certainly there were clever and determined incendiaries at work. These were priests, professors of seminaries, Jesuits and Franciscan fathers, who openly preached the doctrine that to violence violence must be opposed. Nobles, too, fanned the flame, themselves took arms against the sea of troubles. Foremost amongst the rebels were the high-spirited mountaineers of the Oesling. From Vianden, Our, St. Vith, from Wiltz they came, and from this same Clervaux, sworn to refuse the foreign yoke, to deluge hearth and altar with their Christian blood rather than devote it in this Satan-cause. Shriven and houselled they went out, carrying with them

the solemn benediction of the Church. Cudgels, scythes, and bill-hooks, with such muskets as they could get, were their weapons of war, but these had been blessed by the priest; every man's shield was faith in God and the right. So they were called *Kleppelsarmée*, Cudgel-army. "*Et get fir de Glaf!*" "Here goes for the Faith!" was their pibroch. It was another La Vendée.

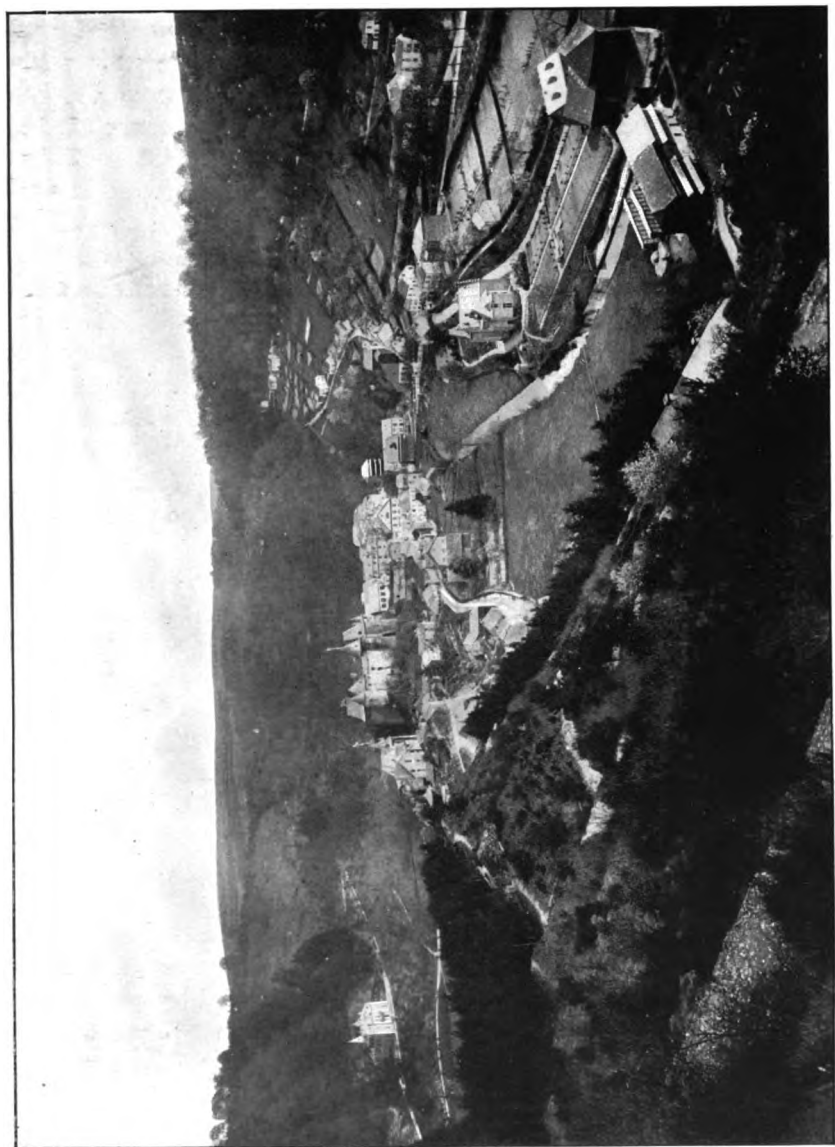
They gave great trouble, fought intrepidly, had some meed of success, most of all here at Clervaux. There, down in that seigneurial park upon the mountain-slope, was enacted the last great agony. All the best men among them foregathered there, fought like hyenas, killed and wounded right and left, kept the republican troops at bay for hours; it was almost a victory. But at Arzfeld things were going otherwise. There the poor brave crusaders were being cut to pieces. One escaped man, after the struggle was over, took refuge in a forest and let himself down into a deep hollow oak-tree. When the hubbub around him died away he tried to climb out, and failed. He thought of wife and children, and raised cries of distress. For six days and nights the people of Arzfeld heard the dull confused outcry coming from the forest; but night-noises are normal here; "it is a spook," they said, and only huddled together more closely. Then the sounds grew faint, and ceased. Thirty years afterwards the tree was cut down, and a skeleton was found, with a gun, a watch, and two silver crowns.

After Arzfeld the surviving rebels were arrested, marched off in chains to Luxembourg, and thrown into the casemates. There they lay, some three hundred, priests and peasants, almost starved, frozen with the cold blast from the open portholes, ravaged with disease and famine. Then came the slow mockery of a council of war, five months of it, with foregone butchery in batches. Sometimes the judges, touched with pity, offered loopholes for exculpation; not a

man would buy his death at a lie's price—" *Wir können nicht lügen !* " The Clervaux mutineers, thirty-eight of them, were shot there ; those of Arzfeld, too, nine in number, each kneeling before a tomb dug with his own hands, received the contents of ten rifles. When the smoke had cleared away, one was seen trying to rise from the ground ; " *O my son !* " he moaned—and a second volley rolled him over by the side of his comrades. Not long after, eleven more were guillotined, among them an idiot boy. Upon the rebel Communes a fine of 49,000 francs was imposed. Had it not been for a single writer, Engling, we should have heard nothing of all this business. It was just a common incident of the times ; a burning drop in that great French volcano's last lava-tide (but one) of blood and tears.

And this monument pictures the beginning and the end. On the side turned towards Clervaux, the armed yokels are kneeling before the uplifted Host ; the legend is, " *Better to fall in battle, than to see the woes of our people and of the Sanctuary.* " On the other side, the survivors stand before their judges, with their brave word, " *We know not how to lie !* " That word was well. Piece it all together, and paint in this clear valley-hamlet for a background ; the story lives, a sharp vignette cut out of history's patchwork.

What is that large, high-terraced, consequential building, smug in the park where the peasants fought, fleeing across at the old Castle from broad arrogance of lawns, parterres, and fountains ? Is it the seat of some Bostonian capitalist ? The old manor dwells fatherly amid the clustering houses, its dark turrets and cupolas backed by rich domes of trees ; but this parvenu rears its brick head in moneyed aloofness, redly scowling, a blur of garish paint upon a delicate etching's corner. It is the new Castle ; and the author of it is Clervaux's present lord, the Comte de Berlaymont. If



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CLERVAUX



you would mourn over a neglected tomb of taste and feeling, you must look inside the old Castle. That, you will find, is neither ruin nor home, but an empty shell or casket, from which everything of beauty and value has been coarsely torn away; a house of gaping wounds, nude and slashed as though a Roundhead army had ravined through. Was it Boufflers? No, nor Revolution; French cannon are innocent of Clervaux. It was the master of the house. Could you peep into the "superb residence" afore-mentioned, you would see all the old Penates there; the carvings, the oak, the marbles of the hearths. In these banquet-halls, ballrooms, bedrooms, slovenly and heartless neglect reigns supreme. Old pictures slashed across, hideous Empire paper rotting on the walls, rat-riddled spiral staircases, battered clocks, consoles, fauteuils, carved escutcheons, genealogical trees of the Lannoy family, old billiard-tables with pockets, attest the maxim that house divided against house falleth. Here and there are things of value and interest; contemporary portraits of Marie-Thérèse and Joseph II.; a picture representing Francis I. at the battle of Pavia delivering up his sword to the Comte de Lannoy; even great Gobelin tapestries. The chapel, with its magnificent sixteenth-century carved oak gallery, is a sight to weep for; the broken altar, the reredos-picture in strips, the battered stoups, lamps, and censers, Christ in the sacristy fallen from the cross, mouldy and impious ruin everywhere. I rush out and sit down in the shade of the old tree on the terrace, under which the seigneurs rendered justice, to think; to weigh the price of the fine new house against the cost of repairing the grand old house and making it habitable, clean, and cosy; to wish I were the Comte de Berlaymont, and then to thank heaven devoutly that I am not.

Castle and seigneurie go back to the twilight dawn of

feudalism. Count Simon of Clairval appears in 1157 as witness of the signature of Emperor Frederic the First, confirming the rights of St. Maximin's Abbey at Trèves; in 1214 another Simon of Clairvaux is guest at Lady Ermesinde's wedding with Waleran of Limbourg; in 1340 Wauthier de Clairvaux has the hardihood to stand security to his insolvent friend and suzerain John the Blind for the payment of 16,052 reals. Twenty-six years later the family unites with those of Brandenburg and Meysembourg. Ferry de Brandenburg-Clervaux figures among the nobles convened by the invading Philip of Burgundy as Duke of Luxembourg. Next, the estate passes by marriage first to Nicolas de Heu, then to Godfrey of Eltz, and finally to the great family of the Lannoys. We have already spoken of Charles de Lannoy, vice-king of Naples, governor of Tournay, general-in-chief of Charles the Fifth, conqueror of Francis I. at Pavia. The Lannoys held Clervaux until the middle of last century, when the last of them died childless. His wife, Baroness of Tornaco, followed him in two years, and her nearest relatives, the Berlaymonts, succeeded to the property after a lengthy lawsuit. Thus the present Count, in this cenotaph of good taste and proper pride, inherits a patrimony which has passed from hand to hand in regular next-of-kin succession for at least eight hundred years. This being so, the villagers (as I heard from the ex-steward of the castle) think he might conceivably have taken a little more pride in his beautiful domain—all that is left of a kingdom of forty-four villages of olden time. And, with all deference, I agree with them.

CHAPTER IX

IN THE WILDS OF BLACK ERENZ

BETWEEN Beaufort and Echternach the Sûre conspires with its affluent the Black Erenz in a sandstone-madness. Of this saturnalia the lesser stream is ringleader, abetted by its own western tributary, the Hallerbach, and other saucy little water-nixies. From Breitweiler where the high road, marching stoutly across its lawlessness, to Grundhof where its revels end exhausted in the wider reaches of the Sûre, Black Erenz rides like a light-hearted blizzard, turning every decorum of Nature topsy-turvy in a straight track of devastation. This beautiful debauch of the waters holds sway for a matter of five miles, and is called the Müllerthal; Midderdale, in an old map of 1569; from a little group of mills at a place of side-ravines whose brooks invade the stream.

In this long green-grey chaos walls and floor are rivals for the palm of splendid licence. The dun rocks that overhang the narrow vale are very battlements of Jötuns, grimacing fantasies, a Walpurgis-dream of the monstrosity that lies beyond the spectrum of form. There is no contortion so Cyclopean, no shape so unshapely, but finds place in this procession of bizarreries. All possibilities of bristling tower and gloomy rock-chamber, of overleaning wall and sombre burrowing corridor, of pillared cavern, imminent arch and tottering spire, are of this demonic masonry of the Müller-

thal. The infra-liassic sandstone which builds these bastions, part and parcel with the Jura, reaches here a notable outgrowth ; they call it Luxembourg Sandstone. It rests upon a calcareous bed, so soft that the yawning cracks which open in the overlying masses are continued downwards by atmospheric corrosion and cause mighty blocks to loose themselves along the lines of fissure and tumble pell-mell.

The stream makes the valley, the rain widens the work. Nature's tiny myriad hammers chip off fragments like houses, which may fall where they will ; they crash through the slanting forest, they find the stream-bed, would in blind requital block the limpid dance of the element that has undone them ; but the stream has eyes, they prove its diversion, it plays with them, sparkles on over them, under them, to this side and to that ; decks them Nessus-like with corrosive shift of mosses, splits them anew for its trout-brood to spawn in ; presses them, in mocking robe of sedgy purple, into its own booming revel of opalescent cascades ; plays the wanton with them, breeds upon them here, as only in Kent elsewhere, that exquisite "*Hymenophyllum Tonbridgensis*", pearl among fern-kind. For water is ever new, and makes all things new, and is stronger than all. "Black" Erenz is clear as the noonday firmament, outgleams her "white"-named sister, heaves a most tenderly-candent bosom for him who parts her veil of leaves to look. They call her Black for the dark ravine, her home, whose sides make darkness of the brightest day ; darkness with the convergence of their double frown, darkness with their mantle of pine and hazel and blackthorn, darkness with a ramp of stone whose cold chasms have scarce seen the sun.

And down this lone Arcady there would be a malison in the stillness and the darkness, but songs are heard lilt-ing out of the leafy glooms, and little wings hum in the great sombre spaces, and the stream thinks aloud. Those

spiritual lines of St. Amand keep brooding through the shadows,

*“J’entends les ailes du silence
Qui volent dans l’obscurité.”*

But there are times when silence herself is silenced, and the wings frayed away. Deep in mid-vale the river confronts one black rock, bigger and sturdier than the rest ; she hurls her lithe body upon it frantically, white with spumous rage, over-topples it gnarling banefully, seems never quite the same after the scream of that great triple cascade. It is Schiessentumpel, Shooting-Pool, for the silver trout leap over the stones.

Upon the left heights opposite Müllerthal mills, where the garrulous Kasseltbach from its parallel gorge at length breaks the wall and wins in, stands the one poor skeleton of human pride, the one wistful protest of man’s arrogance discrowned, in all this scornful wilderness ; a gibbeted trophy of the futility of man’s dispute with Queen Nature, here at her empire’s zenith. Through a naked upstanding window one sees the blue of heaven. It is the Heringerburg, a broken casque upon a giant’s brow. This gaunt heap of stones, dethroned before history remembers, was once the stronghold of the brigand knights of Heringen, bandit-nobles of the forests and ravines, burglars of castles neighbouring. Many a curdling tale was told by peat-fires in vassal homes, many a listening goodwife shivered over her distaff at the hearing, when the story turned upon these corsairs of the wildwood. At last the nobles of the country round, they say, banded together and destroyed their fortress.

The tale is told on this wise. Once upon a time a wicked knight called Konrad lived in the fastness of Heringen, who was forever prying upon his neighbours or quarrelling with them. He had but one redeeming point—a fair daughter,

Adeline, who was as gentle as her father was turbulent ; the darling of the country-side, as he its curse. One day it came to the old baron's ears that Klaus, or Nicolas, Seigneur of Mersch, had called him a filibustering fire-eater, or some elegant archaic name to the same effect. Next day Klaus, while out hunting and separated from his henchmen, found himself seized from behind, pulled off his horse, gagged, bound, dragged to Heringen and thrown into an oubliette. There this flower of the noblesse lay and languished for weeks on a bed of straw. One day, having given up hope, he was preparing for death, when a bolt above him slid softly back, the heavy lid of his dungeon opened, and, aureoled like a saint in the flood of light that streamed in upon him, he beheld the sweet face of Adeline. "Papa is out for the day," said she, stepping down lightly into the prison, "and I am come to set you free". With that word she knelt by his side, and producing a file proceeded to sever the fetters, while he, murmuring broken thanks, gazed upon her face as it had been the face of an angel. When the last trammel had been sawn through he rose painfully to his feet and fell rapturously at hers. "Another time," said she ; "you have not a moment to lose ; fly !" Reluctantly but rapidly he flew. Arrived at Mersch, he was told by his faithful squire that the county families had decreed the cup of endurance to be full, and were sworn to raze this Müllerthal den of Cacus over its miscreant owner's head.

Next morning a formidable troop appeared on the slope leading up to Heringen gates. There were the lords of Fels, Hollenfels, Schœnfels, the sires of Beaufort, Meysembourg, Pettingen, Ansembourg, Simmern, with the Seigneur of Mersch at their head ; and they evidently meant business. "Pooh !" said undaunted Konrad to himself, "let them fire away. I have got Klaus". And he was for going to bed, much in the devil-may-care spirit of the Baron of

Sheppey in dear old Ingoldsby. Suddenly while passing a window he caught sight of the Seigneur of Mersch, whom he supposed to be snug under the keep, mounted on a prancing horse outside, giving directions to the besiegers. This altered the case; so, first dragging his undutiful daughter by the hair to a dungeon and locking the door on her, he prepared for defence. It was a long and bloody siege; at length the castle was fired and an entrance forced. After an obstinate resistance, the garrison surrendered. The fallen baron was about to receive the *coup de grâce*, when the noble Klaus covered him with his shield: "Tell us where your daughter is, and we spare your life!" he cried. "Where you were yesterday!" was flung defiantly in his face for answer. "Forward, men-at-arms!" shouted Klaus, and followed by his varlets he disappeared dramatically amid the tottering walls, blazing timber, and red-hot lead. Upon the falling Castle, with the prostrate, cursing Konrad guarded by a ring of stern-faced knights, the scene closes in smoke.

Five years the Castle of the Müllerthal had stood in ruins, when one evening a white-haired pilgrim, leaning on a staff, knocked at the great gates of the manor of Mersch. It was old Konrad, the fierce marauder of Heringen, returned, a repentant Christian, from a journey of penance; he was come to beg a lodging with Klaus and Adelinde, the happy pair, to end his days in the peace of amendment and the fear of God. And never, we may be sure, was prodigal father more lovingly welcomed.

Another romantic story is the following. Once, they say, there was a daughter of Heringen, fair as the evening star and songful as the nightingale. She owed her musical talent to her protectress, the fairy Harmonica; who, when she was christened by the euphonious name of Griselinda, not only endowed her with a voice of surpassing witchery as a baptismal gift, but most thoughtfully threw in a curse upon

all who should presume to be insensible to its charm. Hence the enormous boulders that strew the vale—simply petrifications of unfavourable critics, who seem to have mustered tolerably strong, judging by the number of the indurations in question. With her enchanting notes, wedded to the cithern's counterpoint, the demoiselle would wake echoes from the rocks in the long evenings, while her truculent sire was busy somewhere trying not to wake echoes with a crow-bar. Large audiences gathered silently every dewy eve, in the valley below, drinking in her liquid notes and admiring the studied unconsciousness of her pensive attitude as she leaned, chin on hand, at her turret-window. Her adorers, whose name was legion, tried their utmost to induce her to change hers. But she would not be Mrs. Legion. She smiled upon one only, the gentle Chevalier of Folkendange.

One delicious afterglow, while she was executing a bravura of exceptional range and brilliance, this impassioned youth yielded to a master-impulse and set himself to scale the giddy rock upon which the home of his tuneful love was situated. He had accomplished the greater part of the ascent, when a particularly difficult chromatic effect, rendered with more than ordinary ease and finish, struck his ear so forcibly, that he lost his head. This loss might not in itself have proved fatal to one so slenderly furnished in that region, especially as he had already lost his heart ; but unhappily it was immediately followed by the loss of his balance, which he found shortly after—where one usually prefers to find a balance—at a bank. But the bank was the bank of the river, four hundred feet down, which being exceedingly concrete at that point, induced a serious fracture along his line of least resistance ; a misfortune complicated by the remarkable circumstance that, though light-headed, he had fallen feet upwards.

The fair cantatrice, who had been watching from her turret,

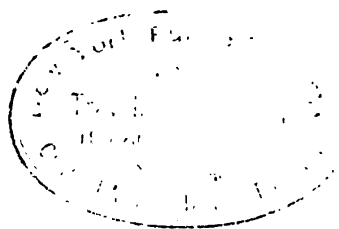
now descended by a longer route, fearing the worst. Finding the elect of her heart reduced to a state of detrition in which, she saw at a glance, he could never again smile upon her, she raised a wail of lamentation so pathetic, so unearthly, that the night-owls drooped in their rocky roosts with envy. It is credibly reported that the finale of this swan-song attained the higher "C", which in happier moments she had often striven vainly to compass. Be this as it may, she never sang again, and ere the swallows had wheeled southwards and autumn's alchemy had turned the leaves to gold, she paled and died. And still her liquid notes, tuned to an eerie plaintiveness, are heard in summer nights among the solitudes of the Müllerthal.

*"Cette Griselinde vantée,
Si docte en bécarré, en bémol,
Que plus d'un poète a chantée
Ne fut jamais qu'un rossignol."*

As the Erenz approaches its tiny estuary the right-hand rock-line recedes eastwards to run up into a rough triangle whose two upper sides are part of the Sûre valley, while its base—the brook Eszbach's caprice—comes near to join the point of departure. On the other hand the more uniform left flank of the Müllerthal sends out a single straight member the other way, to cradle another brook, the Hallerbach. There is thus formed a sort of rock-tree, with Müllerthal for trunk, a straight branch on the left, and a triangular branch on the right. At the end of the left limb and in the middle of the right triangle are two lofty plateau-perched villages of almost equal altitude, Beaufort and Berdorf; high-basking nearly thirteen hundred feet above the sea they smile at one another across the confusion, convinced of sun. At topmost of that tree, in the map-sense, stands Bollen-dorf; at the extreme elbow of the triangle, closing the long

Sûre-reach, Echternach. Along the limbs of naked sandstone every way the streamlets, those pulsing veins of crystal ichor, thread themselves; and though some flag in summer, spring gives them another heart.

First, the thin limb of rocks to the left or west, called the Hallerbach; the aisle which leads to Beaufort as to an altar. As a descriptive style, I deplore rhapsody; it is unconvincing. Even as scenery the actor's, so is blurting eulogy the scribe's confession of weakness. But the beauty of the Hallerbach is so delicate and so dear that the rank and file of words, for sheer justice' sake, breaks out in mutiny of praise. It were a poor thing to mulct an exquisite woman her meed of compliment, for mere parsimony of phrase. A sort of chivalry bids me laud the Hallerbach, that Tempglen, slender, deep, and quick with vitalities sung only by the birds whose loves they bower, where Flora has ensconced her greenest, choicest secrets, weaving dainty broidery for the torrent's bed; where lace of frond and petal unfolds ever daintier blazonry; where a thousand little shafts of light break through the arborescent tracteries, and every fringe of moss or ferny tassel has its round, particular sun. All down the glade, a flight of rock-stairs tapissed with adder's tongue and maidenhair, flowering-fern, club-moss and trumpet-moss, hart's tongue, spleenwort and polypody, the water bounds with voices, yet the great blocks impound here and there a quiet pool for trout to flash in; the descant of bullfinch and linnet never flags, there is no gap in the blue and scarlet arabesque of flowers. Above the many-folded torrent the gonfalons of branch and tendril wave and intertwine; and not alone the familiar tiny lucencies of bell and tube and star, of gentian, saxifrage, anemone, amaranth and royal osmund, mountain veronica and speedwell, but things of gentler birth blow here, growths too elect and frail for gardens foregather without fear or jar, and know all day





BEAUFORT CASTLE

[To face p. 189]

unvexed the gentle communion of their kind. Fain would I catch some breath of Theocritus' spirit, that you might walk astrally, by grace of a few words' magic, this valley of virescencies. In such a dell Pan is not dead, and Undine has found her soul.

Then, the sheer sun, an open space, the rocks know themselves naked, and again a second glade like the first. But in that bright moment the Hallerbach has sped away to the left, and Hubertusbach, stiller and deeper, relieves guard at your feet. That patch of glare, that little old stone bridge, has somehow broken the spell ; the valley is now no more a broad-roofed fane of leaves, but strait and rugged and less verdurous. Presently the roar of a mill begins, the rocks converge till valley becomes cleft and stream is strangled ; then, sudden space, a green sedgy lake in a bright green world of cliffs, and Beaufort Castle.

Castles, I should have said ; for there are two, a Feudal and a Renaissance, cheek by jowl, and the pairing has a strange look. Around the vast and towering donjon with its meurtrières, its machicoulis, its clustering curves of masonry, the white and green rocks stand about like embattled towers ; for this is the Burg of the Plain. High in air, where once was a pont-levis, a giddy plank spans the chasm between the two manors, the old and the ancient ; across it, bloused figures flit mysteriously to and fro, for the messuage of the Beaufort lords is now a factory of *Kirschengeist*.

The old powerful line of Beaufort, or Befort, sprang out of the house of Wiltz. When, in 1593, Gaspard de Heu, sire of Beaufort, took sides with Dutch Orange, that Spanish Tiberius, Philip II., had him beheaded at Luxembourg on a charge of high treason and heresy, confiscated his estates as he had done those of Vianden, and gave them to his favourite, the Count of Mansfeld. Now there was a certain poor boy, born in the lowest quarter of Luxembourg Town,

and his name was John Beck. This boy became first a shepherd, then a postillion. He married a fruit-girl, but found her temper so unbearable that he left her, and enlisted in an Austrian regiment. Being a smart youth, he kept an eye to his own advancement. At last the opportunity came. He unearthed a plot against the house of Austria, and rose thenceforth like a cork to the very top of the social whirlpool; becoming a baron, Field-Marshal of the Imperial Army, and Governor of the Duchy of Luxembourg and County of Chiny; distinguishing himself so brilliantly in the Thirty Years' War that the people still look upon him as one of their greatest heroes. His first care, on reaching fame, was the education of his children; and when he made state-entry into Luxembourg he sent for his shrewish wife and placed her at his side.

This Beck bought Beaufort Castle for 60,000 francs, turned it into a barrack, and built himself a twin castle by the side of it. Under threat of French invasion he put the two castles in a state of defence, drilled the brave villagers of Beaufort, and taught them to barricade the village with trees. The castle long remained a cavalry station; in Beaufort they are still quite in their anecdotal age about the thrilling and not always overchaste performances of the soldiery. At last the place fell into the hands of a Belgian Count, who marauded its materials for a mill. A bad example soon spreads, and ere long every villager began to take each his barrow of stones, just as in the old tale St. Peter came down night by night and transferred the marbles of St. Paul's Without-the-Walls to his own Cathedral; and there would have been nothing left of Beaufort Castle had not the process been stopped. But the skeleton is superb.

High Beaufort village surmounts and subtends, attained through narrow, old-world streets of leaning houses, streets which are flights of steps. The retrospect upon those twin

manors, set in the oriel of the hills, gains distinction as I mount ; to rise above them is in that measure to revere them. Here in Beaufort are new houses too ; of seventy, oldest of the old, the cruel fire of twenty years ago has left no stone or rafter. At the tiny inn a little coterie of artists will spend all summer for love of delicate Hallerbach. Monsieur Kessler-Bleser, the host, is a man who stands unmoved while the world rolls, and surveys its evolutions with an untroubled and slightly cynic eye. This eye lights on me as I sit in the flower-wreathed verandah, waiting for the lazy *malle-poste* to be horsed. After ten minutes' silent gaze—no one ever hurries here—he asks me—“will I taste the famous Kirsch ?” It has great staying power, he says. It has. It stayed with me all the way to Reisdorf-on-Sûre, whither the diligence conveyed me down sloping, open plains in the eye of the westering sun.

Return now to our starting-point, at top of the tree's trunk, the Müllerthal ; and bend face, this time, eastward. The climb to Berdorf from the Erenz' mouth is the scaling of a bank that has reared its proud shoulder a mile abroad of the stream. To walk by this right side of the estuary you would think the little reveller innocent of any Müllerthal-madness, so demurely aloof from the far grey range on the height does it die in the Sûre's bosom ; a deathbed repentance which tempts a smile, if you have come by the Schiessentümpel waterfalls.

The steep old road that winds the ascent starts near the little ruin of a chapel, which was probably the first Christian church in the country. A strong tradition insists that St. Willibrord built it, after tracing its shape on the soil with his abbatial cross. It is called the Michelskirche. But tiles found in its foundations, marked PALLADI, point out the Saint as father rather by adoption. They link the dragon-slaying Archangel's cultus to that of his predecessor, daughter

of the brain of Zeus, here enshrined of old with her helm and spear and shield. An enlightened landowner destroyed this chapel, evoking bucolic execration, they tell me to their credit ; destroyed it seemingly to vindicate his power to do so ; which calls to mind a story. An American, travelling in Thibet, was shown by a native guide the interior of a temple of Siva. Before the god a lamp was burning, which, said the guide with proud emotion, had for five hundred years not been suffered to go out. "Pouff! Guess it's out now, stranger!" said the Yankee. Whether this Amalekite left the sacred precinct alive, history reports not. But the best part of the Michelskirche, its ark, was saved, as we shall see.

We must trudge up this old road, with its upheaved grassy paving-stones relieved with pits, a rustic Regent Street ; till after arduous climb appears between the high rocks a single row of squat fruit-trees, bodyguard to a stiff church in the midst ; it is Berdorf. No river gladdens this hamlet, high-beached by the land-sea, no castellated height beguiles its one prim straight line ; it is a stark ridge high up out of romance's way, a file of houses walking with a stiff neck. A fancy of Sussex villages, Midhurst, Cuckfield, comes as I cross skirting fields, which latter in strict English sense are rare out of England. That prude church is my goal. Slate and whitewash could not more coldly savour detachment from antiquity, than here. Yet in this Little Bethel, this *parvenu* among fanes, is shrined an imposing relic. Not "imposing" in the ecclesiastical sense ; not St. Hubert's nose, or the skull of the Baptist when a boy. It is something I should dearly like to set up in an old garden, say with a sundial atop, among quincunxes, walled fountains, rose-arbours, and perhaps a mild, disguised Priapus ; did I not feel it to be far more meaningfully beautiful where it is. It is a Roman altar ; a block of granite with four faces ; each

face, framed with carven acanthus-ornament, bears the sculptured figure of a god.

This relic forms the real altar of the church, the seeming altar being nothing but a box-shaped frame, enclosing it. A year ago, dislodging from her potato-field a virgin verger of ripened years, I learned how to open the arcanum by creeping inside the frame from behind and undoing staples which caused the antependium and side-panels to fall outwards. To-day, somewhat fearful of pastoral detection, I presume alone. The church has been painted within and without with paint, and the bulk of the paint seems to have determined altarwards, insomuch that I emerged damp, grazed, and with embossed fingers—but triumphant. There stands the great stone, the altar-mensa resting on its top, Rome pagan upbearing Rome papal. In front lounges Hercules, shoulder and left arm draped in the Nemean lion-skin, right hand on club. He was a strong god in Ardenne. On the left, Apollo, laurel-crowned, bow and quiver on back, twangs the lyre supported on his left knee; these two figures are nude. Behind is Juno, her gathered tunic playing traitor to her queenly limbs, holding in the left hand her sceptre, in the right a shell from which she bedews a hymeneal altar with perfumes, while in the foreground the sacred peacock spreads a stately tail. The fourth side depicts Minerva, armed with casque, cuirass, and buckler, holding her oval shield in consecration over a little household shrine. The four reliefs are perfectly proportioned and preserved. With the flanged capital and base the whole height, by my measurement, is three feet eight inches, the square of each face nearly a yard. The two horn-like prominences usually found on the top of such altars, between which the holy fire was kindled, are lacking; they would have been removed with conversion to Christian use.

A constant tradition has cloven to this beautiful memorial

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that it was consecrated by a missionary from Irish schools in the Frankish period. That it is indigenous is clear, for it is of the unmistakable hard siliceous stone of the Rome-exploited Hohllay quarry near by. Surely the figure of Pallas, pictured not as war-goddess, but as protector and patron, is the key. The Queen of the Air, we saw, was president over that little Michelskirche in the valley. Now, mine hostess of the Kinnen inn knows the altar to have been removed here in 1831 from the old chapel in Berdorf opposite her house, which served the people before this parish church was built, the priest coming over from Consdorf; in that chapel many strange old things are remembered which have been coolly walked off, seemingly, by anyone who cared to come in and help himself. But I hear the oldest villagers have it from their grandparents that the altar was once in the Michelskirche. Piece all these scraps together, then, and it becomes very likely that the *Viergötteraltar*, which speaks eloquently of a time of peace, piety and plenty, formed sanctuary of old for the dwellers in that Erenz valley, who came from the parts round about to offer host and prayer for the Four Gods' blessing upon field and forest, upon home and hearth and herd.

In any case, here is a reverend old thing, native of the place and expressive of its spirit, which has not been huddled with its kind in that cemetery of murdered individuality, a museum, to be tombstoned with a label and obituary-noticed in a catalogue; but has been happily left, living and as it were breathing, where it was conceived and born and once wrought its work. Nay more, dignified with service. For though all that is cognisable in worship is changed, is there not yet a Substance behind and beyond all worship worth the name—the subjective part—the spirit that quickens—which neither creed nor race nor caste can alter?

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For here the interest, I think, is something more than archæological. Is it not, this thing, a picture-block of historic evolution, a visible escarpment of the stratification of religious thought? Is it not the higher faith deigning to ground itself upon all that is enduring in the lower; planting its sublime doctrine and reasonable service among the dim heavenward gropings of a wistful past; unifying four "unknown gods" in the transcendent knowledge of One?

Some years ago, the excellent Curé said, a stranger came to Berdorf, offered fifty thousand francs for the altar; but the little Commune smilingly shook its head; "*nicht*", added the priest, "*weil es ist eine Rarität, aber weil es ist ein Mysterium*". There is this in symbolism, that the poor in spirit can make it their own.

But I must push on towards Echternach, edging along the base of my rock-triangle. The kind folk at the inn insist upon a guide, one Michel Hofmann, a Tyrolese-garbed swain of twenty, whom I look upon and love. Perhaps I may strike sparks out of his shy silence presently. A thin straight arm of craggy forest, the wild wood Ireltgen, leads to the Pisgah that looks down upon the old Abbey-town; a narrow way opening on the Delectable Mountains. This Pilgrim's Progress is peopled with many a giant, all friends, whom a placid wondering pantheism has surnamed every one with "Thurm" and "Kop" and "Ley". It is a strangled Müllerthal. Such high leaning-towers, hanging chambers, and gaunt labyrinthine emaciations, playing skeleton at the feast of leaves' and mosses' luxuriance and bird-song innumerable, rather bewilder than enchant. There is bombast, but no breathing-room; you say to Nature, "Dear Mother, don't be hysterical; come into the open—you have no idea what a lovely day it is". My guide, of full-moon face, rivals the rocks for interest. They are his personal cronies; he halts from patient peasant-trudge, pats their

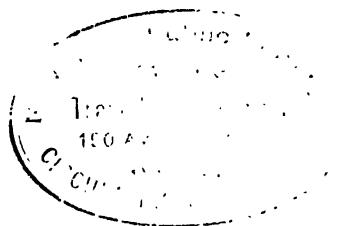
bases, peers up at them with greeting smile ; I heard him speak to them more than once. Sometimes he regards them thoughtfully, as though he would say, "You need repair". No beaming godfather, contemplating a new baby, could display a readier talent for seeing likenesses. He descries Turk's heads, skulls, centaurs, naked women, will have me see them too. If I do not see them, he pities me. But I do see them ; one can see anything through a medium. I am glad of the big, chaste, visionary countenance, the crunch of that long slow equine tramp upon the leaves of many autumns. It opens channels, as does all large, dumb, simple company. I revere a peasant as I revere a child.

At the gate of this gallery straddles a mass of rock quarried with three successive caverns. Two are dark and need torches, the third is vaster and lets in daylight. All the vaulted roofs are a mosaic of round depressions, the moulds of millstones hewn by Roman hands from the rock. Here and there hangs the male disc, left unsevered. Scarce a yard is to be seen uncrossed by these laborious circles. The dislocation of colossal crumpets from a stone ceiling puts the Twelve Labours out of the list, to my thinking. The adamant hardness of the rock raises the question of what manner of tools were brought to this undertaking, and what sort of inverted backaches were brought away from it. Each cave itself gives sign of artificial hollowing ; everywhere are the curved parallel scratches of the chisel. The third and chief cave is a piece of architecture, for it is supported in the centre by a pillar of living rock tapering downwards to the thickness of a man's leg, just sufficient in position, shape, and size to upbear the roof. The stone has been whittled down to this minimum ; another grinder attempted and the artificer would have had more grinding than he bargained for. Here, then, is the matrix of our Berdorf altar ; and I fancied I saw the hole whence the big

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cube was quarried. The whole mined rock is called the Hohllay—Hollow Rock. Over the entrance is an inscription stating the indebtedness of the "Jugend von Berdorf" to an enlightened commune for having made the place accessible. It is gratifying to reflect upon the antiquarian zeal of the "youth of Berdorf." I regret that I could not see more of them. All that I did see was a posse of urchins, who followed me up the church nave *en culbute*.

The long ravine, running due east, sends out a northward spur half-way, forming a "T" inverted. Along the main track, between great upturned boulders and glossy mottled beech-trunks, the brook Aesbach's bed, to-day dry, bears tortuous witness to her vernal gambols, a dead child's track among flowers. At very midmost, where her prime should be, the Halsbach comes living and leaping down the side-gorge, finds her withered and gone; creeps sighing into her forlorn bed, an alighted Eros stretching out arms for Psyche in the darkness; eddies on alone, all tears, to sob demand at bosom of Mother Sûre. She is the jealous Aphrodite who steals the streams, abetted by the sun; but he brings the freshets again at the year's new birth. This wedding-trouble of the waters is the main and middle beauty of all the glen. Its temple is a clear circle in the woods. From under Pérékop, a dizzy massive cliff, the stream issues breathless; opposite, two white vainglorious monoliths overtop the tallest trees, coldly watching; from the outstanding embaying leaf-masses the peewit and the magpie make a mock of the rill's moan. All here is humid, ferns droop, mosses glisten, the stones seem to weep. Turn aside and follow this lonely dingle of the Halsbach, a narrow place of high ramps where the sun loses heart, and you come upon a deep receding alcove, roofed curiously with the rock's overhanging bulk. Under it is a great rough stone table, three blocks set round for chairs, and



the remnants of a wall outside that enclosed all. It is the Ziguernerlay, the Bohemian's Rock ; called after a Prussian faint-heart who lived here for months with wife and children in hiding from military service of 1870. My guide's father saw him daily. One day he strayed into fatherland, and they gave him a pressing welcome and fatted calf à l'allemand.

On again by the straight way, making for Echternach, and briskly, for this is the twentieth century of our salvation, there are rocks and rills in heaven as well as earth, and upon my upturned nose a large drop has distilled warning. The ravine, as such, ceases ; the stream makes off to the left, I part from its easy way and mount, mount straight before me, for this is a pilgrimage, and a palmer should come down over the mountains. Thick woods have swallowed me up, the sun's countenance falls, and in the highway of the leaves there stirs that spirit of sibilance which is the storm's outrider. Then the wind opens, and my green awning tells the tattoo of the rain ; a sharp blue gleam to the west individualises the tree-boles, and the thunder's long irritable menace begins. The forest thins, I emerge into the squall upon a high place of tumbled cliff and slippery goat-paths, and half heaven and earth opens beneath in a semicircle of sulky loveliness. For Nature is but in a pet, and it is a sky half-livid and half-ultramarine that rolls back north-westward over the long limb of the Sûre to that grey abbey-pleasance in the distance, the old Villa Bolena, inkling of Bollendorf ambushed round the curve. No Echternach ; it is still ahead, lurking below the brink of the rock-chain. Through the far dark haze a forked finger keeps stabbing the horizon, but overhead the wind's ministry has bared the invincible light.

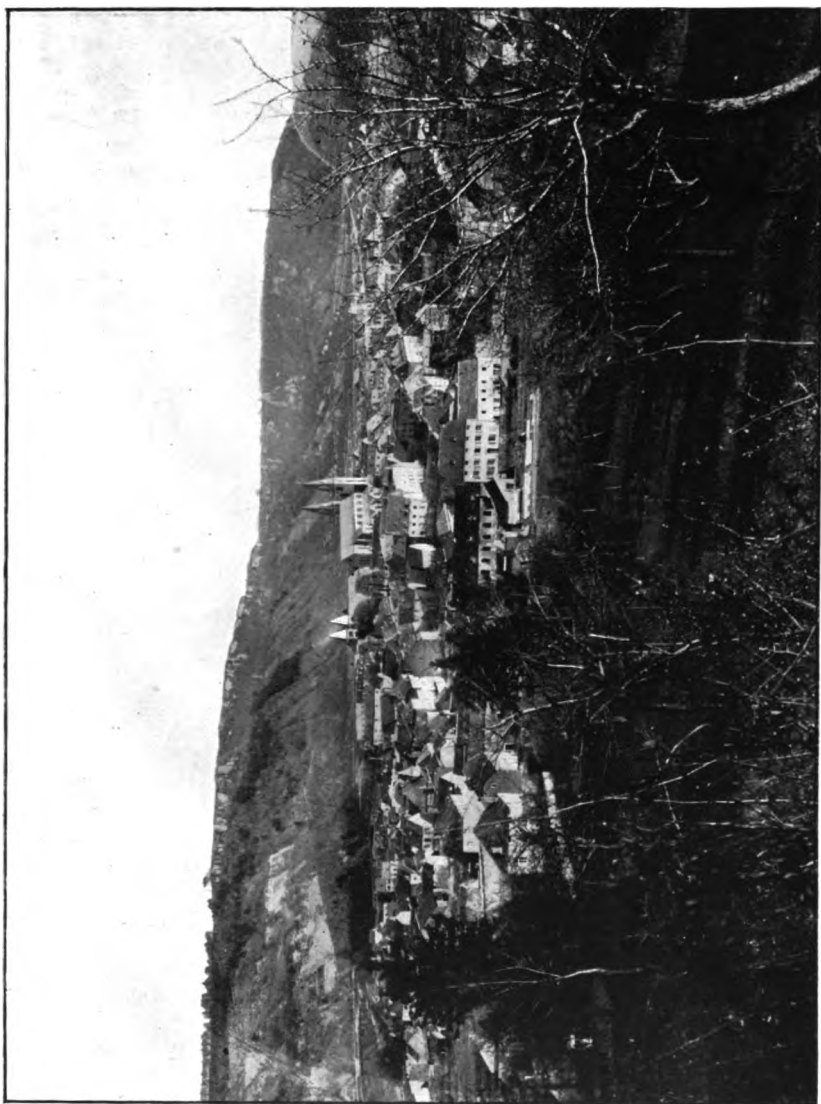
And here, as the goal nears, the frenzy of the rocks has grown sublime. For the last defiles lead down into a

deepening limbus among whose shafts Korah might feel *chez soi*. Some Hephæstus of the igneous deeps has loosed a hill from the mountain lengthwise, and the angel of the valley has been in time to arrest its fall. From the bottom of this grim gulf, which has never felt the sun, the sheer strata, ascending right and left, seem to rake the sky, where hanging-gardens of ash and beech, constraining every fissure, give leave of view ; at end, a towering obelisk, buttressed to the mass by dizzy verdancy, commands the pass. It is the Wolffschlucht, haunted by many a dreadful tale. Here, in form of "a black dog of vast bigness", dwells a miser, whose ban is to sit upon his treasure until someone shall touch him with blessed beads, delivering him and receiving his pile as wage. Near by, in the thicket, lived once a hideous water-beast, who would drink up the Sûre by night ; his pastime was to take his plunge when fishers fished, capsizing their crafts.

From Thermopylæ I gain Locris, and lo, Bœotia at last ; which is to say, issuing from the defile, I come down at a run and alight on a headland, whence the desire of my eyes frames itself before me, the little Holy City, the country's birthplace, altar, and soul. I have happened on a beautiful moment. High over the north-eastern uplands thin twigs of flame keep playing in the murk, but the town lies mild in sun. Low over the old gables, so shapely in their shapelessness, one little fleecy cirrus-cloud has lost its way. Blue as the sweep of Our Lady's skirt the broad river threads the Abbey gardens, laps the town and whisks into the woods. Between storm and shine, a blessing promise, there leaps a stalwart rainbow clean over the northward cliff, over the bordering river, over the high old Abbey-walls with their battered tourelles, basing its nearer arch upon the town's heart. On the top of that height sits the little chapel of St. Liborius, perked above the cell-window of an ancient

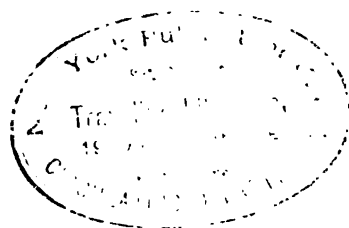
hermitage some fathoms down opening out of the cliff-face ; in the midst of the town is the basilica with its twin towers ; the great opal bridge of splendour strides from behind the chapel and plants foot between the towers. It is for a moment a star-shaped city transfigured with a smile of heaven. Such a glory from the north, leaping into this Abbey-church, might recall the path hither of our British Saint, rich with Northumbrian sanctity, Irish learning, and Frisian experience, twelve hundred years ago ; to kindle in this valley a star, whence shall issue the manifold radiance of heavenly doctrine into all the land. Those vast, white, veteran Abbey buildings have served their turn, are now in the world's hands ; but the world here is gentle and good, and the fancy comes that heaven lets down thus at whiles its tinted seven-fold drawbridge, a way whereby sainted abbot and prior still wander home.

The exquisite spectrum fades, and the mystic evolves the material. Echternach seems to lie in the midst of a far-reaching plain, a level parquetry of many-coloured culture whose hues, in that iridescent centre, all find nativity. It is a palette that lies there outspread, splashes of colour outlying everywhere, one ravelled mess of colours in the midst. A closer look brings second thoughts, and the illusion vanishes when you descend. The seeming plain is a wide and gentle, but a deep, concavity. These tinted champagnes, these leas and orchards, pastures and vineyards, are the slopes of an alluvial basin, a round fertile bank heaped up by the river against the circumference of sad old sandstone that heads those distant hills ; the alluvion is of yesterday, the hills are from everlasting. Historically, Echternach's centenaries do not reach their teens, counting one behind Charlemagne's zenith and no more ; and even that is patriarchal, compared with Luxembourg. But there is abundance to show that Escht Hernach, the later Epter-



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nacum, was the haunt of Celt and Roman long before Dagobert's daughter dedicated to Wilgis' son her precious ingle of the Austrasian hills. "Augusta Trevirorum" with "Mosella", and a confluence of Roman roads, are but ten miles away. That hoary little parish church there with its two romanesque turrets, that might be own child to the Basilica, sitting tree-girt upon the curious round mount that rises in the middle of the town; it represents a dynasty of renovations whose archetype, a little wooden basilica, was found by St. Willibrord when he came; this humble sanctuary was but Christian successor to a succession of temples of the older cults. Olympus once owned that eminence, Asgard earlier still, it was always a rotunda of the Gods. That stout old bridge over the stream, with its white road marching away opposite from the town, bridge against whose massy stanchions the winter ice-floes shiver into sparkling fragments; its six rough arches rest on Constantinian piers. Surely Ausonius must have been thinking of this gracious dell, when, addressing his loved Mosella, he spared the Sûre—just where she goes about to bring the blended tribute of the Prum and Nims to the statelier stream—a little of his praise:

*"Namque et Proneae Nemesaeque adjuncta meatu
Sura tuas properat non degener ire sub undas,
Sura interceptis tibi gratificata fluentis;
Nobilius permixta tuo sub nomine, quam si
Ignoranda patri confunderet ostia ponto."*

For Minden, down stream, where united Prum and Nims flow in, is almost visible from here.

CHAPTER X

THE STORY OF SAINT WILLIBRORD

BUT the beauty of Echternach, by your leave, is to be dearer than classic, tenderer than scenic. I am thinking that it is a little English colony that I look down upon in the storm-light; and a spiritual English colony indeed it is. Its beauty stands in service remembered. It is an old lamp, which once blazed illustriously in a sanctuary, and now burns serenely in a home. You may fancy it musing, "Now when I think thereupon, I pour out my heart by myself; for I went with the multitude, and brought them forth into the house of God; in the voice of praise and thanksgiving, among such as keep holy-day". That Abbey has been a phoenix that through nearly forty generations has risen perennially from pillage, from blockade, from fire, and, not least, from the smothering world-slough. Or call it a tree, planted by the waterside, to whose root has been laid the axe of all war and rapine that has ravined along the highway; yet it ever lived, and put forth green. At last the term of service came, and the overflowing scourge, Europe's agony, passing through, threshed clear the outworn husks of things from a new era of mysterious fruit. During those ages it has been no more unsoiled than has the holiest earthly precinct. Avarice, ambition, pride have usurped the crosier of St. Benedict, and the end, glancing backward, has cast its gilding glow upon the means; but what healthy eye can look down on those inglorious cloisters,

and conjure aught but the awakening of spirit, the sweetened manners, the self-help, that have radiated from this place in brightest days, as daylight from a sun? If you seek a monument, look round. The pious, pure, humane, industrious folk that people all this Mosel land—get to know them, look into their homes and on their faces, win their trust and sound their hearts; set them beside the lower classes of enlightened England, and then cast a censorious stone, if you can, down into the discrowned Abbey there.

This Willibrord was without question one of the magnificent men of his time. The Christianising of Europe was the work of a few men, and some of the stoutest of them Englishmen. The Gospel could never have conquered, had there not been giants on the earth in those days. Heaven wrought with Nature, and she brought forth her rarest and best; virgin-births, sired by a Purpose outsoaring man's ken. They went forth faith-armed, these Napoleons of the spirit, spoiled continents, routing armies of aliens. God has His Maccabees and His Martels, His Alexanders, Hannibals, and Cæsars. These men were not hectics; they were robust of frame, virile of idea, unsentimental though tender enough on occasion, scoffers at hardship, needing little sleep, feeding when and how they could. They were sons of Nature, sucked her sharp milk before ever they lapped of the river of grace. That is why they conquered, because it was seen that they were not saints merely, but men before they were saints. It is very beautiful and arduous to be a saint, but to be a man is half the battle and twice as useful; unless indeed you may take it that the two are very much the same thing. Where now is their like, these Willibrords? is fame a mere beeswing, fruit of age? must centuries roll over a dead brow, before it can be canonised? or has the breed ceased with the need? Nay, heaven knows the latter cries still to heaven, and we have

precedent for the hope, that the moment brings the man. Yet a whisper comes that our gospel-warriors are strangely taken up with trifles, that the crusade is in danger to become a question of clothes. Perhaps the Devil has borrowed a tactic from the astute colonist, who disarms the unsuspecting savage with beads and little bits of glass. He proffers aromatic smells and pretty embroideries; theological niceties and critical speculations; party shibboleths, ceremonial punctilios, feminine amenities, mutual admirations. Then, leaving God's garrison to wrangle over and preen themselves with these glittering *cadeaux*, he departs with a bow—to his work. It is only when a Man takes up the cross-handled sword, a Man incorruptible by gewgaws of any and every sort, that the devil quails. For no unmanly saint ever reclaimed for his Master a single outpost in the wide wicked principedom of this world.

St. Willibrord was one of these Anakim. His name, "Willing Bread", bespeaks his kind, the man ready to be ground and eaten, the man in earnest. It is no wonder that strange stories, to be taken in the spirit, hover about the memory of his birth; the glowing meteor that filled the world with light, descending and entering, as a ray, between his mother's lips when she was brought to bed of him; it was felt that such men must be a sort of incarnation of a super-humanity—the tales are but lisplings of that knowledge. Child-oblates, in that day, were laid, flower-crowned, beneath the altar; baby Willibrord had such hallowing; and from mother's milk, like the Baptist, weaned his own sturdy body on the honey of the desert. His father Wilgis built, at Humber's mouth, a little monastery, and died there; "Blessed Wilgis" is honoured here at Echternach. As to the boy Willibrord, St. Wilfrid took care of him at Ripon cloister, gave him the tonsure, sent him in his twentieth year to Ireland, the world's academy, where St. Egbert finished

him in the sciences. At thirty, armed with zeal and learning and the sacred character of the priesthood, he chooses, like Caleb, his mountain; sets out, with his eleven companions, for the scene of his life's apostolate, the Frisians' inhospitable land. King Radbot at Utrecht receives the devoted band with a coldness ominous of something worse; so Willibrord, whose piety had no way addled his brain, apprehends that zeal and learning are not always armour enough, in this bad world, that even the youngest of us has much yet to learn; betakes himself to the court of that great Pepin, Mayor of the Palace, finds shelter and honour; takes the Lady Plectrude into his confidence, makes himself felt as a good man ought, becomes the man to be supported.

So, finding himself five years older and none the worse for it, he goes, with letters from the powerful Pepin, to Rome, receives Holy Father's blessing and commission, starts anew for his Frisian arena with the Holy See at his back. This time, instead of presenting himself at Radbot's rough court with "I am come by your leave to christen you all", he takes Frankish leave, gives Radbot a wide berth, goes to work with serpent-wisdom. That Pepin move had been the sanest of his life, for Pepin had been carving out Frisian conquests of late with secular arm. Where Pepin had smitten, the Saint goes and slays; takes that way, right and wise in the spiritual fray, of hitting a man when he is down; turns the sword round the other way, lays about him with the cross. Pepin's blood-track soon sprouts churches, schools; the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church, and never so fecund as when persecutor and proselytiser work in leash. For I am not saying the sword-business did not figure, at times, in the work of the Saints. But every question has two sides. Frank and Frisian fought on, and the young vine so carefully planted was roughly pruned; churches were razed, priests and faithful massacred.

Now work is begun in earnest. Pepin sees that the ecclesiastical arm must be stretched out to the full, if anything is to be done, so that the muscle may be felt. There is no refusing Pepin anything, it seems; so the Saint again goes Romeward, receives the pallium, that utmost mantle, at the hands of Pope Serge the First, can now as Metropolitan of Utrecht make priests right and left. The mission is pushed into East Friesland, Norway and Denmark catch the deepening light, the Saint's vast voyages trace a line of circumvallation round the tract his holy ambition has doomed, and the savage garrison feels the circles narrowing every time. Napoleon blockaded cities; the saints besieged countries. Time would fail to tell his exploits and dangers. No sacred grove was sacred to him; he would walk in and kill the holy beasts, baptise in the holy springs with ringing voice. Lots were cast upon his life, rocks were cast upon his head; in the Isle of Walcheren a club-brandishing idol-sacristan missed him by a hair's breadth; but the angels never relaxed their guard. Were his methods repellent? they were St. Paul's before him. Judge them by his achievements. He was a true Bishop, an overseer, not an overlooker. Later, when he was past his sixtieth year, a compatriot came out to help him, Winfrid-Boniface of Devonshire. Three years the two Englishmen laboured side by side, till Willibrord said, "You are the better man, I grow old; take my crook, tend my sheep, let me seek my cell and con the account which I must render soon". St. Boniface would not hear of it, went softly away. But the older labourer was a prophet. For Boniface was destined to be Primate of all Germany; but after his old master's death he did indeed come and succeed him at Utrecht, where he won the martyr's palm.

But all this life of labour by Holland's shores, what has it to do with Echternach? Much every way. For Echternach was the work's soul, all this time, the workshop of plans,

the closet of prayer ! It was in the closing days of the seventh century that the unwearied apostle arrived at Trèves. What took him there it is hard to say ; but it was one of the best days that ever dawned for Austrasia. As so often, a woman's hand drove in the nail of destiny. This Jael was the abbess Irmine, daughter of Dagobert king of Frankish Austrasia ; Willibrord was the doughty Sisera she nailed to her tent-beam at Echternach ; the nail was a gift, her little hospice there, with a vineyard in *Monte Viennensi*, upon Vianden hill. Kindness obliged ; our Saint began to build. Gifts poured in, gold and land, and in ten years there rose upon the spot a monastery under the rule of St. Benedict. Then from their miserable cabins in the neighbouring hamlet of Beden come poor sons of the soil, and built fair clean little houses of wood and stone, the monks teaching them, all round the friendly precincts of the new stronghold of God. It was as though serfs came snuggling at a castle's foot, to take the quarrels of a warlord ; but in this case the seigneurie was spiritual, mighty to the pulling-down of dreder strongholds.

This was to be Willibrord's fortress, military station, recruiting-field, parade-ground. From this sally-port were to issue picked men, valiant in faith's fight, to help in the Frisian campaign. Here was entrenchment from the ever-hostile Radbot. From that instant Echternach, Willibrord's Town, becomes a focus of light, learning, and civilisation, with whose rays darkness has to reckon. Reinforced, the Saint goes back to Friesland. Wherever the men of God set foot, hearts rise clean from the font, idols are flung away, hands join in reasonable service. Cities arise from the sea in their wake, wild lands are won from the waste, men leave off from their sorry gods and learn to help themselves. But Radbot, the old enemy, begins to ravin now in earnest. Pepin, past work, can no longer go turning up

the furrows with the sword, the sowers are hard put to it for a time. Birds swoop, thorns spring, tares appear. Pepin, ever opportune, dies, and his son Martel, the Hammer, arises in his might. Charles was a man of finality. Hammer-like he falls on the foe of his fathers natural and spiritual, and Radbot, that old agent of Satan, after thirty years' raging, is crushed at last. All he has left to the world is his name in the word "rabout", which to this day means Blind Fool. The Frankish banner waves unquestioned, the sexagenarian apostle seizes the psychological moment, and recording angels chronicle the annexation of all Frisia to the kingdom of Christ.

This of Radbot is irrelevant, but refreshing. He had been brought, by threats and coaxings, to take on him the easy yoke. Had it not been for a bishop's indiscretion he might have figured in the Calendar to this day. The royal pagan had already immersed one of his august legs in the baptismal font, when a thought struck him. "May I ask", he said, turning to Mayor Martel, "where are my dead forefathers at present?" "In hell, with all other scurvy heathen", rashly put in Bishop Wolfran, who had not been spoken to. "Oho!" replied Radbot, removing his leg; "then I prefer feasting with my ancestors in the halls of Valhalla, to singing hymns with your little starveling crew of Christians in heaven." Entreaties and menaces were alike in vain. The Frisian died, as he had lived, a devotee of Wodan and the Æsir.

So, through half a century of tireless and acutely-perilous labour, were two countries reclaimed from darkness by one man. Set his work in the frame of contemporary conditions, the determined hostility of heathendom, the barbarity of northern tribes, the immense difficulties of travel, and Willibrord looms from the past, an almost incredible colossus. I have turned aside and made long talk about

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him, because it is essential that you get him well in mind before I can take you to Echternach, which is simply Willibrord materialised townwise. It is not that he was unique of his kind. The man was but one of an Apostolic College elect from the climes and the centuries to wake up the wide soul of the world. They were, as has been said, præternatural men, special creations, all of them; mysterious scions, conceived and born of the demanding moments, the acute crises that called them forth; saviours of doomed communities, just in time. The world always arranged itself when it felt them coming, these men; there was ever some cuirassed Pepin or strong-minded Martel, wittingly or unwittingly going before them to sink the mountains and raise the plains. Their Voices hailed them, far away, to regions distant from the lands of their birth; they left their Bethlehems for Galilees, being without honour in their own country, for peoples are ever spoken to with men of strange lips and another tongue. They moved among the great and powerful, and were honoured in their day, for that is a cynic error which feigns that the world does not honour good men—there is nothing the world reverences so dearly as good men, and there is no discernment of goodness so keen as the world's—when the world misdoubts the priest, that is bad. It may detest him, that is well; but when it doubts him,—then let world and priest beware.

And they died, these men, and were carried by the chroniclers into Fame's bosom; "the Saints", we call them. Yet that beautiful old word, soiled with some ignoble use, has come to have a savour exotic and something sickly, like a perfumed sanctuary with shut windows, or those pale waxen flowers with which we deck the dead. It were a pity if, perverting that honourable title of the heavenly peerage, we should seduce ourselves to forget the *virility* of these men;

if the mitre and the aureole should mask the great contriving brain, the pall and chasuble overcloud the enduring limbs and clean strong heart. St. Willibrord looks imposing enough in his window or niche. But if you would see the man himself in character as God thinks of him, you must strip him of that uniform and place him, bare to the waist and hod on back, among the Austrasian peasants, or see him gliding in his coracle, clad with rough old tunic, round the cold shores of Zeeland, recking nothing what poised stone or levelled arrow might lurk behind the dreary dunes, caring only for the weal of his dear enemies. Is it a rash fancy of these nobles of the court of heaven, that they sometimes sigh amid their peaceful mansions for one crowded moment of the old passionate virtue, the exuberant loving conflict, the watchings often, the hunger and thirst, the fastings often, the cold and nakedness? Do they never glory, even from their thrones of light, in the things which concern their infirmities?

Well. Our labourer ended his task, and they laid him to rest, as he willed, beneath the Echternach altar. Strange, that his name has no place in that somewhat hastily-compiled peerage, the Calendar of the Church of England; one might have thought him something to be proud of; but Echternach honours him. The abbey he had builded and planted, fostered by Carlovingian munificence, grew and prevailed, a tree drawing its life from his bones. The Dutch work went on; St. Wenefrid at Nymegen, St. Adelbert at Egmont, St. Plechelm at Oldenzaal, became new Willibrords; "Echternach", says Dom Pitra, "abates never the procession of its abbots and monks; the colonists come in a cadence, like the music of a festal choir". Nearer home, the arts of agriculture, architecture, and not least the simple art of common sense, radiate into all Lotharingia; priests flowed forth, churches arose, serfs were enfranchised, the plough invaded

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Arden's beautiful jungles, and many a ringing *Te Deum*, inspired by harvests of soul, soil, and subsidies, shook the roofs of the sumptuous fane in the valley of the Sûre. The high Abbey-walls squared the town, municipal charters enthroned reason and freedom, and Echternach appears as a fortified capital two hundred years before Luxembourg was anything but a little deserted outwork over a rocky chasm. The "Flower of the Rule", the "Pearl of the Order", this child of St. Benedict was called; "these holy men", said the Emperor Charles the Fourth, "no less for the renown of their virtue than for the merit of their piety, shine illustrious throughout the universe". The personal tradition of the Abbots flowered long unbroken, in learning and sanctity. Once, during a vacancy, Charlemagne stepped in with a high-handedness all his own, and administered Abbey-matters for a year. Kings of France, Emperors of Germany, and reverend signiors unnumbered, became nursing fathers, brought gifts of lands and gold.

The lords of this city in cloisters were lords indeed. Paladin or suzerain could not brandish sword or sceptre more absolute than this cross. Owning allegiance to the German Emperor only—and it was but a loose shackle that bound these princelings to the throne—he was Seigneur, Lord Chief Justice of town and provostry, elector, later, of justiciary and sheriffs, coiner of moneys, wielder of sovran rights in all their plenitude; leader, in state processions, of the ecclesiastical dignitaries of the country; vice-president, often, of the Council of State. In times of peace the burghers lived happy and contented, under the protection of the crosier.

But the very gold and bijoutry of that sacred wand proved often the undoing of its clients. Ambitious princes with an eye to wealth installed themselves in the chair abbatial, wore the mitre, wielded the cross, as has been seen in the

old picture which used to be in the presbytery here. The good Benedictine monks were replaced by bloated canons; we remember how the great Siegfried, first Count of Luxembourg, reformed this state of things, induced the Emperor Otho to turn out these drones and rehabilitate the monks. The magnificent Abbey, stacked with wealth and resplendent with the treasures of art and service poured into it from age to age by prince and postulant, bred luxury within and envy without, the people bearing the brunt in either case. The place became a high target, a mark for depredation, was pillaged again and again. The Counts of Luxembourg, in their continual skirmishes with the prince-archbishop-electors of Trèves, would turn it into a camp. Twice in mid-fifteenth century it was ransacked by the Archbishop, once in mid-sixteenth by Albert of Brandenburg, once in 1596 by the marauding Dutch troops, when it was made to pay four thousand crowns to escape burning; it was then that Albert Bertels, the country's venerated historian, was carried off to Nymegen and mulcted twelve thousand crowns for his ransom and two thousand florins for his keep, as he himself with some natural wryness records. Then, in his turn, Louis the Fourteenth, hovering hawklike round the coveted fortress of Luxembourg, swooped pitilessly on our abbey-town not once nor twice.

Finally the Sansculotte hurricane blasted the town, dispersed the Founder's bones, scattered the monks, destroyed the fine old library, and blowing away the dust of Willibrord's finished work in things, made Echternach the wistful memory you now, from this headland belvedere, behold her.

CHAPTER XI

ECHTERNACH AND ITS DANCE

IT is time to clamber down now and pay pilgrim's dues, for the sun's breath has swept the sky-spaces blue as an awakening infant's eyes, and every spire is a beckoning point of light. Walk about Sion, go round about her, and tell the towers thereof. This enormous mass of Abbey-buildings was once immenser still, a city in itself. A convent, schools, public offices, a porcelain factory, have parted Willibrord's garments among them. Never did stranger medley rise upon unity's ruins. Through old oaken doors in the high walls a peaceful stretch of garden melts into a cloistered maze; gymnasiums, fire-stations, tax-depôts, any hermit-crab craft you please, but no air of sacrilege; round sudden corners trellised garden-walks, statued saints, rippling fountains, patches of Norman wall; beyond, the wooded cliff. The bees have swarmed in the lion's carcase. But the Basilica stands inviolate, fair, and spacious, a Romano-Gothic place of crimson-tinted shadows where slender column and stalwart pier, after that peculiar Saxon fashion you may see at Huyseburg, Drübeck, and Ilsenburg, upbear in alternate service the arcaded nave-walls. A hundred years ago, where these stately altars stand, blast-furnaces, profanely bellowing, blackened and cracked the lofty apse-walls; fifty later, half the church was a barrack for soldiers to snore and horses to stamp in. Then upstood an indignant bourgeoisie under the redoubtable title "Willibrordusbauverein"—which

anyone can see means business—and repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down; insomuch that the place stands to-day, with not much old-world feeling, but decorous and even beautiful with its red-light-tones, colossal statues, and slim shafts strong for bearing. Perhaps the true old nucleus of the church is its Romanesque crypt, property of an adjoining tailor, who is disliked most dearly. Echternach and its Curé desire this crypt as Nehemiah desired Jerusalem, but the man of clothes wants twenty-five thousand francs for it; and Echternach is poor.

I roam the tortuous streets between the amorphous houses, with their aged carven doors surmounted by strange old trade-emblems, their overhanging stories; over the rough-cobbled market-place with that odd little town-hall of pepper-box turrets, arcades, and statued saints, at least half as old as the abbey, where the *échevins* held their courts of justice—*Dingstuhl*, they call it—and where goodwives now chaffer their wares on rainy market-days; past the pillared corridor opposite, which the ancient guild of Echternach Masons built; through the river-bound Abbey-gardens with their glowing peace, over the venerable grey bridge whose arches, guarded by wise old abbot Bertels' statue, spring from verdancy to verdancy, spanning the clear stream.

But it is in and about the little old church of Saints Peter and Paul, apart on its dome-like rock, that the soul of antiquity clings. Nor need we wonder, for the Ark is here, the Saint's sarcophagus with its strange recumbent effigy, under the altar. The way lies past that old triple fountain, gushing in its grotto by the street-side, older than any record, called St. Willibrord's Well; and the little Hospice fronting it. The last is a quaint, unspoiled, age-worn haven, the very gift of Irmine to her Saint. "Twelve poor old men shall live here", said he; and there they have lived. No foe has ever stormed here. The French Revo-

lutionists let the good work bide, even helped it. It is not the vogue to show places here ; but the Supérieure, a gentle little lady, is touched and pleased when, in a figure, I beard her ; does me the honours of the hoary little row of buildings along the narrow courtyard, the sacrosanct, tiny chapel, the happy dotards dozing cat-like in the sun ; fairly loves me, when with adroit sympathy I commiserate the poor French Congregations—these are sisters of St. Charles, their mother-house is at Nancy. After the Paris Hôtel-Dieu, this is Europe's eldest hospital, she says.

So to the church, up the white and pilgrim-worn staircase ; where arrived, the place-spirit speaks at once a perfect peace. All round the church the hallowed mount is tenderly, exuberantly green, drooping everywhere its soft mantle for the thronging red roofs to touch ; beyond are gardens, pastures, till the plains begin their gentle slope to where, along the jagged sky-line, pine-spires flaunt the blue. Whatever curious beauty is in old gables, whatever charm is in looking down on them, is here to be drunk in draughts. Closely all round they press, these oldest dwellings of garb all unchanged, as though, saving the Abbey's looming presence, they loved their little old Mons Sacer best. "You come back to your old mother after all !" the homely church seems to say. One may make the circuit, and feel with Teufelsdröckh, but in softer vein, the joy of tiles. Here, more than at the Abbey, you sit at the heart of Echternach, and are drawn into the beat of its strong old simple life. If you have anything of this love of roofs—*Dachsucht*—with which I exuberate, or ail if you will, you can revel in roofs here, open inner eyes and look down right through them ; see the long patience, the tendril-thoughts trained upwards, the hereditary singleness of ages of faith. If a man's soul speaks in the shape of his skull, why not a town's soul in thatch and slate, in leads and pantiles ?

This church is rough, *sans façon*, bespeaks the botcher of every period. The squat towers, the deep windows pierced in the walls' thickness, through which the light scarce straggles, recall the days when a Lothair, a Conrad III., or a Pope Leo the Ninth with his train of two-and-forty bishops, coming in humble guise to the glorious Abbey, thought no scorn to climb this little mount, and pray. They have a great bell here called Maximilian, after the emperor who brought it, with royal robe of silk and mighty wax candle of three-hundred-and-fifty-four pounds' weight, in 1512. Here too is Willibrord's worm-riddled, puce-coloured dalmatic, and penitential shirt of hair; one of the arrows that killed St. Sebastian, which Willibrord brought from Rome and Koenig, a monk, saved from the French; and a picture of the Saint blessing the dancing pilgrims, which Bertels caused to be painted three hundred years ago. Until the Revolution a Benedictine Father was parson of the parish, living in the presbytery, his meals served from the Abbey kitchens. It is strange but true that the rich Abbots disputed with the townsmen the responsibility of restoring the poor little church. When walls crumbled or rafters fell, long lawsuits raged, for which Saints Peter and Paul paid with sorry patchings. Yet history's irony has left the Abbey itself a patchwork, and shrined the great first Abbot under this lowly altar on the height. Now it is their dream to put him back into the Abbey Church. They will build a fine mausoleum to him there, are now collecting funds for that work, as witness the *tronc* at the door. I subscribe, but am sorry. I would rather they left him where he is, and somehow I think he is of that mind too.

I cannot treat this altar as I did that at Berdorf; so descend from the little Tabor and ransack the town for the sacristan. "Will he show me the Saint?" He unpanels the altar and exposes the tomb. I must take the body on

faith. The effigy is in white marble, and painful; they have depicted him as though stirring in the death-sleep. The sacristan is an enthusiast, with an eye of fire and a cough. He grips me by the arm before this ghastly thing, and descants upon his *ἑστιούχος πόλις* with a fine and informing frenzy. Deep dusk comes down, with a shade of boredom; but I respect the man, and there is a deal to learn of every faddist. Much is said in blame of the talking of "shop", the airing of hobbies. Let a man talk his "shop", say I; he will not then strain himself to talk blankly, will talk *something*; will give me his best. I am now about to enter upon Echternach's Eleusinia, the yearly rite which makes these quiet streets, *mutatis mutandis*, like Thebes in the days of the Mænads; and shall have occasion to embody what my phthisic, ecstatic Ion—who has more to do in the thing's intricacies than any other layman—told me.

You may have heard of the *Springprozession* of Echternach. In this old corner of Europe, as at Seville, the idea of dancing to God's glory, which David mooted in the Psalms and personally illustrated on a solemn occasion, lives still. Question the reverence or fitness of this idea, and you enrol yourself with Michal, whose mocking mouth was shut in shame. And in sooth, forasmuch as we give God much music, it is not lightly cognisable why the devil should have the dancing; unless indeed on a principle of compensation, or divided allegiance, which is a compromise not lacking in high and extensive sanction. In Echternach, this dualistic cult finds no countenance; wherefore, purged and clad decorously, Terpsichore also is among the saints.

Religious dancing is as old as history, was once common in the Church. Tertullian-spirited councils have stamped upon it, holy doctors have fought over it, grave and reverend prelates have practised it; the sixteenth century witnessed dancing games of ball, done devotionally, in French churches;

little more than two hundred years ago it was the senior Canon's duty to lead off the choir-boys in Notre Dame ; in the Abyssinian Church the light fantastic toe enjoys an honourable part in the sanctification of the body's members to this day. Religion has nowadays a tendency to *embon-point*. The grave and the gay, formerly in more stable equilibrium, have polarised. Lightness of heart, once instinctive and all-pervading, has been left stranded by the ebb of real spirituality, and feels self-conscious. Humour is somewhat blown upon as frivolous, survives to religion only in its unwitting forms. Faith is grown lantern-jawed, has banished merriment and finds itself confronting mockery. Expel nature, she returns with seven devils. Sanctity was better honoured when it was less stiff; perhaps true sanctity is never stiff—who knows? In any case the Echternach dance refreshes the philosopher because it trips right up from the old times and certifies him that nothing is absurd which is done sincerely, that unreality is the real essence of the absurd. A man may smile at the thing; no gentleman could laugh at it. If stones be casting, the Anglo-Saxon—Willibrord's compatriot, by the way—may with good grace pause, and think. It is as sane as Dr. Dowie, and as consistent with the Divine Image as the cake-walk.

The birth of this religious revel is lost in the night of time. Whether it sprang up in the thirteenth century, when a great epidemic of chorea spread throughout Europe, as according to some; or whether, as others say, it arose as a sort of homœopathic litany against some convulsive disease among cattle in the eighth, like in principle to that Neapolitan Tarantelle dance-cure for the bite of the Tarantula spider, which set its victims a-twitch and must therefore be counteracted by twitching: it is certainly a remarkable instance of long and constant traditional usage. The younger you make it, the harder will you be pressed in the explain-

ing its vital hold upon the people. The more you realise its dogged deathlessness, the further you throw back, in thought, its birth into the shadows. The fact most probably is that could you track far enough its almost unbroken thread you would find yourself confronting some Celtic orgie or Druidic pandemonium, some indelicate old phallic mystery very different in tone from its modern survival; or at least some ancestral military march of converted Frisian or Saxon, condoned by kindly Willibrord even at his monastery-gates. The mystic, if he please, may connect it with the stories of Orpheus, the Pied Piper, the Fiddler of Brandenbourg, and Giouf of Ispahan, see in it a symbol of the gospel's victor-music, triumphing over heathendom. But come, glance with me at the thing as it is, and think your own thoughts.

It is Whitsun Tuesday, eight o'clock of the morning, a late day of spring. Nature has put on her festal dress, sweet as a betrothed maid in trysting-time. Blooms of lilac and laburnum, lime and elder, make the breath of Echternach like Eden, its face a smile of white and blue and gold. The town is gay with wreaths and flags and streamers, the windows aflame with flowers. In the churches since five o'clock there has been scarce space to kneel for the tale of masses unbroken at every altar; *Introibo* jostling *In Principio*, dim white priests coming and going, the tense air restless with murmured prayer and incessancy of sacring-bells. Now the last housel has been taken, the last *Ite* said, and twenty thousand people fill the streets with the *élan* of one idea. They line the narrow ways in thick-serried ranks, crowd at every window, stretch in double row across the bridge. A sense of serious waiting, as for a solemn thing about to happen, thrills in the air and deepens every eye. On the Prussian side of the Sûre the crowd determines into a multitude which no man can

number, like the multitudes in the valley of decision, spreading past vision up and down the bank, silently, as it were, beleaguering the city. One with grave eyes and round voice of instance is haranguing from a rostrum, clad in cope of woven gold; the jewels in his mitre and the morse upon his breast blaze flashingly in the opposing sun. It is my lord Archbishop of Trèves; to judge by the kindled faces it might be Chrysostom's self. "*Tunc laetabitur virgo in choro, juvenes et senes simul*"—the words are a thread upon which the name and acts of Willibrord are strung like beads of a rosary. Around the preacher the delicate deep lace of priestly cottas and the surplices of singing-men makes a great splash of dainty white; here and there Madonna or Martyr beams red and gold from a towering banner; above the entrance of the bridge rises a processional crucifix of gold.

Sermon over, there is a stir and a heave in the crowd, something is doing, there is a falling back along the ways; the cross moves forward, eight banners escorting; the tapers blaze, from upthrown censers misty spires of fragrance, blue as the distant hills, dispute the air with flowers. Three hundred singers follow, then, the clergy in their scores, the Bishop of Luxembourg, the Metropolitan with pomp of servitors, all chanting the Litany of St. Willibrord in solemn antiphony as they pace with grave tread across the bridge—" *Sancte Willibrorde, stella lucida patriæ nostræ, ora pro nobis!* " By this the foremost are filing into the town; a sober-moving line between dense-packed heads, as slow and decorous, as far from any hint of capers, as the staidest choir-entrance at Westminster Abbey. But now the grotesque enters, under auspices of the sturdy Curé-doyen, who at this point steps into the procession, heading an instrumental choir which might hold its own with that Sackbut-cum-Dulcimer orchestra of the plains of Dura, for

assuredly all kinds of music are represented in it ; when upon the instant an electric tremor tingles along the whole following cortège of pilgrims, instruments to earshot's limits take up the tale of tune, and forty thousand feet, not all light but all exhaustively fantastic, are vibrant in the dance. The monotonous old German air, *Adam hatte sieben Söhne*, has yet something inspiriting in it ; a barbaric din, dreary yet rhythmic, disconsolate yet with an imperious dance-suggestiveness, bidding eyes water and feet twitch ; like the magic fiddle in the old tale, whose spell set heels capering in heart's despite. "*Sancte Willibrorde, alme pater pauperum, ora pro nobis !*"

Yet heart and heels are in no discord here ; for see, here come the young men and maids of Echternach, four and five and seven in a row, holding one another at handkerchief-length, eyes dancing with eyes to limbs' measure, Love in masque of ecstasy mantling in fair faces—for the real Spring-dance is in the veins to-day, and Eros can play the mystic on occasion. There is little of the passion but much of the poetry of motion in this dance of the Springende Heiligen, a sort of chastened polka with its three steps forward and two back, a serpentine swinging unison, good for scope of gracious body-curves. Words are poor painters of this endless swaying throng, a moving wheatfield swept by two winds, a sea-surge whose oscillant ebb and flow stirs some buried heart-chord heretofore silent ; the thing is so new and strange ; men and women dissolve in tears at the sight.

In this dance the youth and the old man rejoice together, the sick and the hale, the bent dotard cheek by jowl with the saucy schoolboy. They dance for health, they dance for the whole state of parents and friends, they dance for the ills of their beasts. The dance propitiates St. Vitus, is good for nervous twitchings above all else, but every valetudinarian foots it there. To that haunting measure the epileptic

staggers to and fro, the consumptive flickers like a dying flame ; at whiles a crisis comes, in mid-procession, there is a quick sickening rush, some poor shadow of a pilgrim is carried off where there is no dancing more; but the dancers care not, look neither right nor left—" *Sancte Willibrorde, salus infirmorum, ora pro nobis !* " Some, very infirm or old, cannot dare to dance, dance by deputy ; many an urchin there, dancing lustily for several invalids, is raising the wind in more senses than one. Some came from far homes in Holland or Germany, travelling all yesterday, are even now prostrate on outlying waysides, lacking strength to move. Here a young mother dances child in arms for merit's sake, there an old man at grave's verge, his breath whistling like a saw, forces to the measure his rheumatic bones ; here a poor cripple, like that Æschylean "day-dream on three legs", jerks himself along ; all breathless, covered with sweat and dust, bowed with fatigue, there is nothing but this strange dervish-fervour that could stay them through the business. If any fall, those beating up behind will not stop their dance ; he must be dragged out, or they will dance over him. At intervals between the dancers comes the braying din of hautboy and clarinet, of bagpipe, trombone, fiddle, accordion, with drum-tap innumerable. Last of all walk sonorous reciters of the Rosary.

So pity, horror, wonder, and that strange futile thrill that rhythmic motion brings, all claim the heart in turn. There is much to smile at, and more to sigh over. If you listen to the music you say, "Silenus should be choragus of this rout" ; if you look at the manifold madness of the great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, and withered, you see Bethesda ; if you consider the troops of tawny-haired children, with their reverent-radiant faces, you say, "Surely on Palm Sunday the children danced like that". Then, suddenly, you think of the Salvation Army. Psycho-

logically, the two things are one. So Professor Granger would say.

Now, seeing you cannot follow this skipful Pilgrim's Progress untrampled, save only, so to speak, *per saltum*, take one great skip, and feign yourself jerked from gate to goal; from the bridge, that is, to the little Parish Church upon the mount, where all things are brought to an end. I led you, but now, up those three-score steps to the green peaceful *parvis* there ; its peace will soon be broken.

It is an hour after noon. The pageant has taken all this time—five hours—to travel three-parts of a mile ; it moves, therefore, at the rate of less than three hundred yards an hour. Now at length, in the dense crowd filling the hot narrow street below the steps, there is a surging stir of expectation. The deafening medley of noises, scarcely soluble into tune or time, is sweeping nearer like an unseen storm. Presently the crucifix gleams out from a gap in the ways, and like surf slowly rolling up from a dark strait the white van of the procession spreads along the middle multitude ; the wail of the bagpipes, the lowing of bassoons, the scream of fife and cornet, the boom of the drums beats up in assaulting crescendo ; and under the flowering trees that pendulous massive sway, a seething onset ever foiled but ever encroaching, threatens the hill of the Lord. They have neared their desire, and the hardest of their pilgrimage is before them ; they must now dance upstairs. Ever three steps gained, two lost ; of five steps, therefore, only one records advantage ; thus they beat out sixty stairs into three hundred. Of such a fugue of the feet we may say, as Browning said to Master Hugues of his performance on the organ,

“ Is it your moral of life ? ”

If so, a pertinent one. This Dance of Degrees, the whole

with the sick, the old with the young, counteracting their own progress and yet progressing, sweating yet ascending, faint yet pursuing, is an apt symbol of the Catholic life, that picturesque dead-earnest, that débonnaire determined siege of the City of the Saints. The burning sun beats on them, the heaven over them is brass, now and again one swoons and must fall out; but the dogged escalade goes on. Meanwhile the leaders have danced into the church, laid down their offerings, and are wheeling around the altar-shrine, swaying still, where the Saint lies sleeping. When all have passed this way, a solemn *Salut* crowns the day; which done, the Host-blessed pilgrims issue from the church, dancing as ever, to set seal to their vow with triple circling round the great sad Christ who hangs upon the churchyard cross. Then the tired throng, going homeward rosary in hand, melts from the mount like snows from Soracte in spring, and leaves its lawns to whosoever will stay and think. Follows a long afternoon and evening of greetings, rejoicings, comparisons, commiserations, mild potations sacramental of friendship; when the philosopher, walking abroad in a village of lights and telling the tattlings thereof, shall find ready to eye and ear much matter for musing. But not until long after the pomp has ended, and common toil regained its dominion over the streets, shall he cease to see the swing-sway of that tidal river, to hear the pounding drone of that relentless tune.

There was more splendour in the old time. The procession ended at the Basilica, under whose high altar the saintly relics used to be. Thrice they filed round the Abbey precincts, once around the shrine, then to the centre of the nave. There an immense golden corona, hanging from the carven roof, adorned with images of the twelve apostles and bearing seventy-two lighted tapers in honour of the disciples of the Lord, was let down over the banners of the saints,

while the pilgrims threw themselves prostrate and cruciform with cries of "Jésus" and "Maria". Then came a visit to the refectory, where the jolly old Abbot sat surrounded with hogsheads, presenting each pilgrim with a measure of wine—the day's last incident but not the lightest-forgotten, for the vineyard-dependencies of the monastery extended as far as its doctrine, and their produce was as masterly distilled. Thus merrily went the rite from none knows when until the year 1777. But the light-heart piety of the times had bred abuses, and scandal went abroad. After the procession, little dances would take place in cabarets and private houses. Wine was strong and will was weak, the glances were too open, the claspings too close; and sequels followed which got the Springende Heiligen talked about. In high quarters it was considered time that the Jumping Saints should *reculer pour mieux sauter*.

Accordingly Prince-Elector-Clement-Wenceslas-Archbishop-of-Trèves put ban upon the dancing and music in the procession; "it must be a walk", he fulminated; and if they were not careful it should be stopped altogether. So they had the dancing-procession without the dancing—Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark. Nine years later Joseph II., whose ideas of religion were almost Anglican in their respectability, suppressed the rite entirely. The clergy submitted, but the pilgrims assembled from all parts and took the matter into their own heels. But the Emperor ate his own words on his deathbed, and so—as the Metropolitan seemed to have forgotten all about it—the whole thing was restored as before. The next deadlock was when the French came; but at the Concordat the dance reappeared, and has continued ever since. Save only that in 1826 the Government of William I. of Holland transferred it from Tuesday to Sunday, "in order that the people might not lose a day's work"; which sapient measure was repealed like its

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predecessors. When the Curé gets the money for the new shrine, the goal will be the Basilica, as of old. They say that if ever Echternach stops its dance without excuse, the plague will come back in all the land. One year the dance was not held; there was no excuse, and the cattle atoned with convulsions.

CHAPTER XII

A FOREST OF STRANGE THINGS

UPON the cliff where the high plain of Ernzen shoulders Echternach is a little old hermitage cut out in the rock. Once on a time there lived here a holy hermit, named Cyrillius. He had a pet hare, a gentle beast which was all in all to him ; it fed from his porringer, companied with him in his walks, lay in his bosom upon his rough pallet. Down below in the valley was the Benedictine Abbey in all its glory.

There came a dark night when the prior, wishing to test a novice, pointed to the little star-like lamp that always proclaimed the hermit's window, and ordered him to visit Cyrillius and bring back some object from him. The boy set out in the spirit of holy obedience, and reached the cell. It was about midnight. The door was open, but the anchorite was not there. Sitting in the window was the hare, guarding the cell. The youth sat down, took the creature on his knee, and, caressing it, waited the old man's return. An hour passed, and it was time to go back. But he must take some token of his visit, and the cell was bare. Suddenly the devil entered into him ; he took out his knife, cut off one of the creature's paws, and set off to present it to the prior.

Then the hermit returned. Full of grief and indignation at the cruel hurt done to his favourite, he applied a herb to the wound, stanching the blood, and ordered it to go in

search of its paw. The intelligent beast descended the mountain, crossed the bridge, and limped all round the monastery-walls. But the great gates were closed, and no opening could be found ; so the hare had to go back as it came. Since that time, on that one night of the year, poor Puss comes limping down the cliff in search of her lost paw. More than one old inhabitant will assure you that he has seen her cross the bridge.

Of this tale there is a variant. In the eleventh century, when the saintly and learned Theofrid governed the abbey, there dwelt in this cavern of the mountain an old magician called Kitzelé. His one thought was to do ill, and he hated the monks because their Founder had dealt paganism a mortal blow in the land. So misfortunes were always happening to them. The crops, which with their own laborious hands they reared to feed the poor, were ruined year by year. Avalanches of stone were hurled down the mountain, barking the fruit-trees and bruising the vines ; or a hurricane hurled the ripening corn to earth ; or the river rose and flooded the fields. Sickness attacked the villagers, murrain the beasts, bears and wolves devoured the children and scattered the flocks. Ardent prayers went up, and the Abbot begged that God would deliver the monks and people from this terrible curse. He did not pray for himself, he said, but for them. His prayers were heard literally. The evil spirit left off tormenting the fathers and brothers, and confined his attention to the good Theofrid. A large black cat took to coming down the oratory chimney and looking on with sardonic grin while the holy man was at prayer. The most shocking thoughts were whispered in his ear as he sang the high mass. His medicinal herbs, which he cultivated so carefully, were ravaged by a hare. But he could have stood all this, if only it had not been for the ceaseless knockings on his dormitory window at night.

Now Theofrid was a man of resource. He had read something about the black art, and he bethought him of a ruse. He made a magic, like Kipling's Woman. He tied a cord to his window, and let it trail outside. That night the beast began its bedevilment again—tap, tap, tap—and then a sudden stop. It had caught its paw in the noose. Quick as thought the holy man pulled the string and cut off the paw. The haunt fled. Theofrid burned the paw and strewed the ashes on the river; for all the world knows that if you mutilate a metamorphosed magician he cannot get back his form until you hand him back the part. If the wise prince of the Church did not know that, what *did* he know? So there cannot be any question that the three-legged hare does appear, or else why two stories to account for it? Besides, who in his senses would entertain any doubt on the subject, when the hermitage is there for all the world to see?

There is a way into Echternach lacking all prescience of wide prospect, a valley-way lowly and leisured, and asking of no "distant scene", but very tender and pleasurable. Ways there are by which we come upon cities and circumstances, ways that have nothing signal in them, but which by reason of a certain quiet remembrance of well-being ever after endear themselves and their goals to us, so that we love the thing for the sake of the way to it. Love's self has no thrill so dearly delicate as the memory of the way by which we were going, when we found Love; nor is any throe so excruciating as that same memory, when Love droops or dies; it is the immortal part of Love. Such ways are always wistful, subtle, beguiling. One never comes upon Love, for instance, over the mountains.

This way is only low level river, two solitary spires, tall trees, and evening. Evening it must surely always be; when I have come this way, it has never been otherwise.

I would not see it in the morning—the spell would be gone. The road from Bollendorf, where the Sûre unserpents itself and walks with straight face all the way, is conceived in the one serene mood of this Jurassic coil. High on the left the Ernzen plateau, in successive rock-ellipses, seen nosing at whiles through the topmost forest, keeps edging shyly towards the valley; but across the serious stream grey crags march on in severe alignment, coping the ramp of woods. Over those iron parapets the sky is one pearl, for the sun is going to bed behind them. A moment comes in the way when the two towers heave into sudden sight, as though a straight vista lay between; one step, and trees supplant the illusion—they are gone. Then the long sad mountains unfold to the left, and dark osier-thickets begin to overbrood the stream; the gaunt shadows overreach themselves one by one and go out; Venus hangs mystic in the dim, vacuous dome. The cicada's insistence makes silence conscious; an old passing goodwife bids "Abend!" and defines the solitude, as she shifts the burthen of brushwood higher across her bowing shoulders; Angelus, quite near, drops belated from some unseen belfry. High against the shimmering blue-grey a great dark goshawk is wheeling in strong lordly circles, persistent, ominous. Again, the spires—Willibrord's two blessing fingers, I fancy. The parting river runs on past them, there is no bridge, no town in sight or sound.

Riverwards, an orchard beguiles the road. Among the tawny apples hangs a bell-handle. Grasp this strange fruit, a bell rings across the stream, a boat comes gliding; a fair supple girl supplies the motive, swaying to a pole; a tame black raven strikes note of mystery, perched upon the prow. Is it "bird or devil"? Charon metamorphosed, or Pluto's self? and what is this Proserpine doing? They transport me with solemn staidness, maid and bird; in the after-

glow a world asleep, leaning to the water, confronts its sleeping soul; twin spires, slant downs beyond, old Abbot's Tower at wall's elbow, banks of willows, all things are double one against another. A peace overhangs this wide low waterway, not kin to the country, Cam-like, with something of the academic spirit. And so round into the darkening town. In all this I pretend nothing scenic, only that delicate spell that haunts the way into certain villages, a charm incommunicable, perhaps, after all—because spiritual. But I associate the lazy ferry with that high-hearted and impregnable, though fleeting, sense of well-being which certain little earth-corners breathe; of which none can pry into the conditions, nor can any psychologist analyse it; in the quest and flavour of which some men and women, and most of all the very young, are epicures. Are not these things written in "*The Child in the House*"?

Comely Bollendorf, terraced on the mountain-bank of the Sûre, surmounts the apex of that triangle of rocks before-named. It has the name of a Baiæ; great local pother is made about its salubrious air, has been made since old Bertels' day, who styled it "*locus amplissimus et amenissimus*". Wiltheim, another topographer, has on it "*locus miræ amantissimis*"; and another, "*ad arcem Bollanæ, benigniorem ærem capturus*". I did not particularly notice all this myself. Certainly it is cool in summer, for a perennial draught comes souging up the valley, scattering the morning river-mists before they have time to brood upon the air and stifle all the day as is their wont in Ardennes vales. For near a century it has been a Prussian place; that a few score yards of river should mean such a difference in hearts and faces! Wearing that mock-military air of bumbledom that scares away the charm from so many a fair German village, it is everything that Echternach is not; frontier-Sûre folds Echternach in her arm, saves it from all that. The German

air is palpable on arrival in more than one sense, for a German band is raging, which prejudices the case for Bollendorf. There is a highly-respectable church and a highly-theoretical hydro, the tiny streets are all called Something-strasse or Esplanade, ignorance of French is a part of proper pride, and most of the males wear big gilt buttons. We all know the Fatherland ; need I say more ?

Yet the shadow of Cæsarism has not entirely succeeded in reforming the interest of Bollendorf. That indescribable half walled-castle half country-house, glooming through the trees, whose gardens and dark ramparts by the river are the town's south-eastward bound, was Villa Bollena once, the mansion of some powerful proconsul or princeling of the court of Trèves, the darling of Diana. A century or so, and the dread Attila, his swarming horde encamped upon the Hunnenkopf hard by, himself lies in the castle growling. Once more a change, and saintly Irmine is the lady of the manor ; from her it passes to Count Arnulfus, who made grant of it to Abbot Willibrord for his Benedictines. From that day it was one of the Abbey's many country-seats ; deliciously cool, ambrosially fragrant upon the hot long summer afternoons when the monastery lay sweating in a breathless steam, and Lord Abbot and Father Prior rode up the river-banks to throw off cowl, take breath and ease among these terraced parqueties, these fountains and dark-green layers of shade. The great Abbey, there, had these dependencies far and wide, and farms too, whose tenants paid rent in kind. A farmer at Berdorf told me his grandfather had bought his farm from the monks.

This great house is now a sort of genteel hotel or *pension*, and if the lotus does not blow by every winding creek it ought. You will not lightly find an older garden or a

sleepier. A Chicago friend of mine justly describes the place as "purrfectly musmurric". Saunter through these rose-trellised pleasantries for an hour in the golden afternoon, or sit in the shade of that crumbling little Merovingian tower dazing yourself through clematis and jessamine with the river's plash and sparkle, and time just drops out; you not only forget the world, but doubt it; London becomes a figment. Perhaps, if thoughts are things, the siestas of so many generations of ecclesiastics amid these arbours have soaked the air with sleep. Madame Barreau, the hostess, speaks out of a dream; I dropped off, talking to her. The house is a sort of Versailles, curious to explore, with its massive oak stairways, great sculptured hearthplaces, painted panels and ceilings, and lofty spacious rooms interminable. The many oaken doors might each open upon a city; the inner doors by which the rooms give upon one another, being set open, reveal the whole vista from end to end. The antique furniture, the presses, the old parquet flooring, the armoires, dressers, tables, cabinets, pictures and window-panes must have caused many a collector to offend through envy; probably their great size has preserved them to the place. Several modest oak-forests, I should say, grace this interior. Everywhere, in wood and stone, is the Abbatial escutcheon, the Echternach stork with sword, mitre, and crosier. Madame amid it all is a Gallio with mobile shoulders, laughs at my questions heartily, knows only her great-grandsire bought up the place at the Revolution for a few thousand marks. The value, all told, would be interesting to know. Could such a house be transferred to Thames banks, no British sovereign need think shame to place it at any royal visitor's disposal. What the sons of St. Benedict could be doing in a like palace, except giving mammoth dances, passes my wit. It is in these *maisons de plaisir*, rather than under any abbey roof-tree, that monastic power and

riches stand confessed. Only—what would the Founder have said, who in Subiaco's caves *habitat secum*?

But Bollendorf boasts backwoods, and they are full of strange things. Behind it are high rocks; these, running round in a jagged oval, support a wooded plateau some five miles by three at longest and widest; of old time a great Trevirian "cover", it seems to me, a warren of barbarians, defended by the several curious fastnesses that still remain around its precipitous edge. Among these rocks and on that plateau the antiquarian, the geologist, the artist, the botanist, the curious of Nature, may find much food for wonder, if they search; but for the most part they don't. At least, you never meet anyone there. If any holiday-maker pass that way, it is by train, or swathed mummy-like to the brows in a motor, or bent double over a detonating bicycle with eyes devoutly fixed upon the dust. From such skimmers of her book, Nature withholds her soul. You must tramp it, patient, solitary if no kin-spirit be of a mind to share your rambles, over rough crag-path and through endless forest, if this beautiful brook-threaded weald is to be to you anything but a blind stone-bound wall. And even so you may lose yourself and find nothing but rocks and trees, for a German Polysyllableverein has been here, marking out "directions".

When the German nation does that—I desire to speak with deferential good-humour—unless you have a fine independent spirit and a strong vein of healthy scepticism, you may shut down at once and go home. For, if you rely upon the directions, you will assuredly never find your way to anything but vacancy and a vexed spirit. They have made this forest like a German dictionary. It is one ponderous practical jest. Crosses, patches, stars of red, white and yellow, have broken out upon the trees and rocks. He who follows these symbols will learn to appreciate the levels to which a

cruel cunning can attain. It struck me at the outset that they were designed to conduct the wanderer over a precipice, but after certain maledictions I concluded that the notion is only to make him lose his soul. These precious Ignès Fatui will lead you into a wild waste wilderness, and then cease altogether ; or bring you to hope's utmost verge and suddenly change ; or point you three ways at once. You fancy spectacled Teuton faces peering at you through the branches, grinning at your discomfiture. I had rather follow my own nose than any such Lead-me-a-dance-Verein ; and indeed it was that way that I attained ; and I now offer the reader this valuable counsel, fruitage of bitter experience : When you are in a German forest and see stars—on the trees—remember that it is all Maya, illusion.

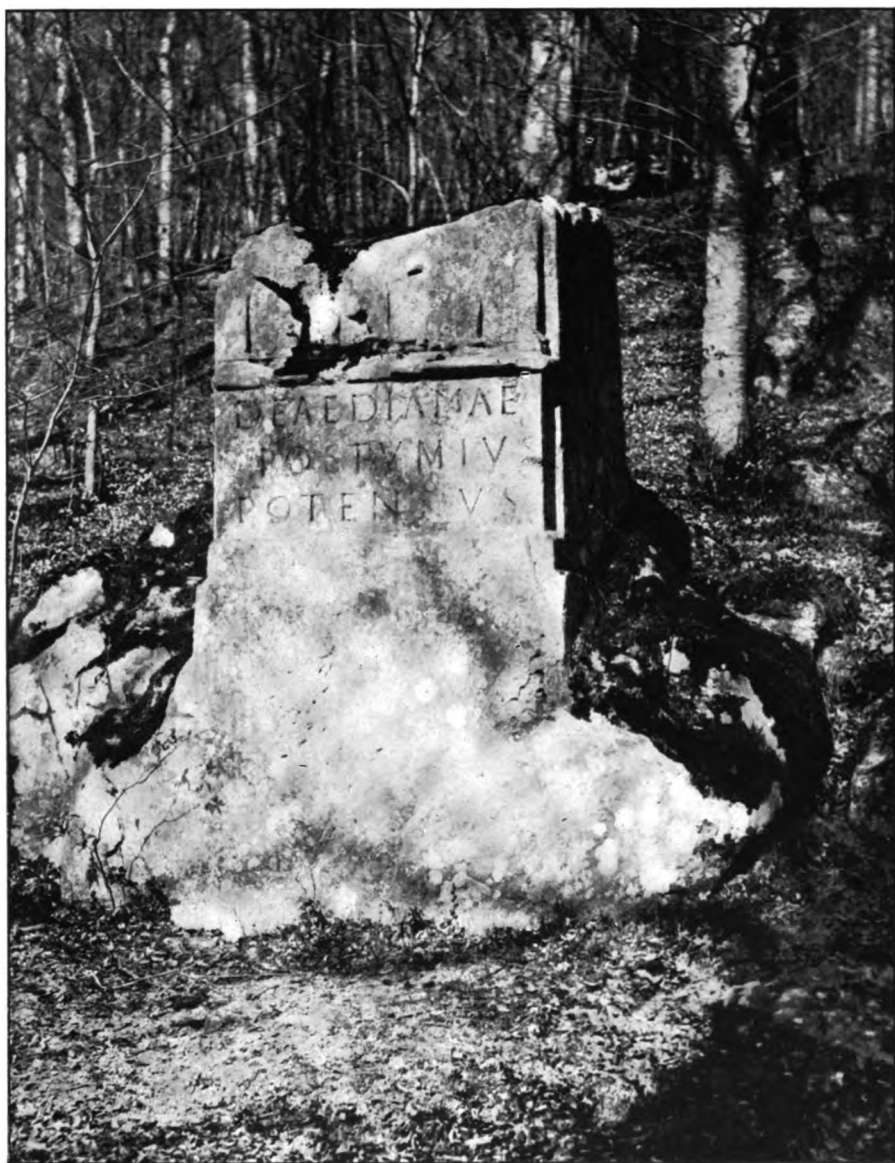
Dian, the Virgin Huntress, was once the duenna of these woods. Now no longer do belated mortals hear the clang of her silver bow, or descry between the white beeches, by the light of her own pale moon, the glint of her chaste, cold train. But she has left a beautiful forget-me-not of herself among the leaves she loved. A faithful servant of the white Queen lived once, about the time of the Emperor Commodus, in the Bollena castle by the Sûre. He had a prayer and a vow, was to make her an altar if she wrought some grace upon him ; she wrought, and the fair white Ara, that rears its head alone in the open temple of the forest, records his thanks. That is all we know of Postumius, save that he was "powerful". No one knows what he asked of Artemis, that he should write his gratitude in this lonely, lovely spot ; certainly no love-favour, for none ever craved her aid in that business. Be it what it might, there stands the memorial of it ; a tall, squared altar, ten feet high, looming white among the oaks and firs, springing out of a living rock far below the line of crags that runs towards

Echternach ; a ghostly thing to come upon by moonlight. On its face, in fair large capitals, is the legend :

DEAE DIANAE
Q. POSTUMIUS
POTENS V.S.¹

The altar was crowned with sculptured beauty once, but only the feet of the Huntress and of her dog, demolished by Willibrord or weather, remain between broken bases of columns. As I part the leaves to get first sight of the thing, a wild red roe, with a pretty congruity, breaks through the branches and bounds out of sight. There is a something sad-sweet about this solitary sylvan memory—this *Dianadenkmal* as they call it in the village with a touch of tenderness, bidding the passer-by *think* on the banished Nature-spirit and her votary—something that stirs in me that serene pantheism of which I believe a Christian can afford not to be ashamed; whispers that Artemis and all her god-peers were bodyings-forth of spiritual thoughts, are therefore gods, at least as reverend as Money, Mode, and Vogue, their supplanters in a new Olympus. They, therefore, are not forgotten, or the divine-human in them is not. Deities live on in their altars, men in the libations they pour on them. The god is ephemeral, the human service he inspires is the permanent part of him. Heart-service created the god and survives him. “*Μῦθος*” is “tale” and “counsel”; take counsel from this tale. Little dreamed devout Postumius, when he “loosed his vow” in the forest glade, that his eucharist would still remain when the empire he served should with all its calendar of jostling gods have been scattered like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors, and himself, the Powerful, be “Posthumous”—threescore and ten lustrums of lustrums afterwards—in nothing but his piety. Was he that

¹ *Votum solvit.*



ALTAR OF DIANA
(IN THE FOREST NEAR BOLLENDORF)

[To face p. 236]



great Posthumus, general of Gallienus, "Saviour of Gaul", who purged Belgica of the Germans? Impossible to say; here, in any case, is a tenderer fame. Inspired to prolong his Mistress, he immortalised himself. And the Christian may leave off from his controversial shibboleths, his party wars, and his clothes-punctilios; for assuredly, here or elsewhere, it is only in his Sacrifices that he will live.

Mount now among the lofty rocks, the scarp and girdle of the plain; what a pleasant hiding-place, if you can edge in through the narrow portal, is that *Eishöhle* for hottest days, prone among the leaves that carpet the stony chasm! Here, though the noon sun pour down very fire through the rift high overhead, the glacial air-current never thaws, flowing from under the towering monolith that guards the entrance. Approach within twenty yards of this place, the icy air is all about you. Scale that rock that rears its head above the tallest oaks, Bollendorf lies a scarlet triangle fronting a little fork of the Sûre, tiny in the abyss; all the rest of the world is dark wold, rising every way to dream against the pillowing cheek of heaven. The Sacred Wood near by, followed, leads to a Celtic fortress, Niederbourg, an impregnable rounded promontory over a precipice, full of tumulary barrows, where they gave battle, it is said, to Cæsar. A little to the south is a Druid altar; near by, the legended Roth Kreiz, which the people call Heidestein, Pagan-stone—a venerable tribute to what unknown god, none can say. Here, in the forest solitudes, the sunsets can work strange spells, playing their broken melodies of colour among the leaves, refracted through the light vapours massed above; here, at the sun's death-throe, walking through a Hesperides of violet, green, and tawny leafage, I have seen through the tall tree-boles the horizon all one fire. What wonder if a rainbow of wild tales, prismatic as its own evening-magic, overbrood the enchanted grove?

Not far is the ancient tree, Tanzkill, "Beech-Mother", round whose broad trunk, a hundred years ago, the barbaric folk-dances had not ceased; the tombstones, squared and hollowed, of some barbaro-Roman fray; and yet another eccentric old *Fagus*, whose hollow timber bosom is a well of living water; the sparkling reservoir is fed from a source hidden among the roots, has never failed, is the wild hinds' winter drinking-trough. To the east, where the cliffs embay themselves, you may light on Schweineställe, Pig-Stables; but poetic spirits call it Schweigestelle, the Site of Silence. Water and time, here, have made the stone a honeycomb, whose strange chambers have harboured cattle in many a day of invasion. On the face of one rock, in great deep characters, the legend runs:

ARTIONI BIBER

Who is Artio? Doubtless the workman charged by this Biber with the making of a votive slab to Arduenna, or Ardoina, carelessly transposed the letters. The name of Diana Arduenna occurs in an inscription at Rome. Here, then, again we have our Huntress; truly, great is Diana of the Ardennes!

Or, you may push up northward above Bollendorf into the chaos of the Kruppicht Felsen, stand upon the eminent Osenlay, descry, across the meanderings of Sûre and Erenz, distant Arlon upon its hills, and southern Thionville; beat on into the woods, where rare *Arnica Montana* grows, find out a great slanting cross-shaped stone, touching which there is a word to say. This Fraubillenkreuz, tradition says, is the Sibyl's Cross, or Lady Bellona's or Bella's Cross, names which smack of Bollendorf; but the wise report it a boundary of Middle Age, set up to landmark the estates of Vianden, Neuerbourg, and Echternach Abbey. Northwards, still, another aboriginal war-post on the plain's edge, called

Wikingerbourg—Viking's Tower, I suppose, where at the sole accessible point seven massed cemented blocks make a straight rampart, defending the square base of a watchtower. Eastward through fir-glooms, at the plain's further rim, Schankweiler ; since the eleventh century a hermitage affiliated to Echternach ; the last hermit left but a few years ago. Suddenly, beside the chapel, a precipice reveals the world, all yours ; of thrice seven village spires the eye takes census ; and the extinct craters of the Eifel, like grey bastions skirting the horizon, hint a yonder Rhine.

I do you the honours of a few of the suggestive odds-and-ends that strew this uncatalogued museum, not as vaunting anything rare or marvellous, for this little principality teems with fragments of the broken vase of antiquity, nor will you lightly find any tract more fruitful in those pretty whimsies Nature loves to play, when she knows she is quite alone. If you have anything of the Cuvier spirit, you can build up many a megalosaurus of lore and law from such scattered shards. All dry bones can live ; it only needs the breath from the four winds of Wonder, Observation, Pains, and Common-Sense.

CHAPTER XIII

IN OLD VIANDEN

I THINK I said that the river Our, coming down from Prussia, plays landmark until it reaches the Sûre and resigns its office to the larger stream. But in the Our's function there is a gap. The gap is Vianden. The river cuts this town in two, but the town is Grand-Ducal on both sides, a half-circle of fancy-frontier looping it in. Wade, angling, across to the other side of the water above or below Vianden; you will soon find out where the Prussian frontier is—and pay for your angling.

Vianden is the *ocellus* of fair villages. It has a distinctive and living individuality. To come back to Vianden is to come home. There is warmth and colour here, with no tincture of dreariness; Oesling at full of beauty without the austere touch, the little lonesome shiver, that runs through one's rambles hereabout. That big green half-wheel of mountain-ridge, with the straggling strip of ruin riding upon it, like a rugged ship in full sail forging its way over the circle of a world; the faubourg lying flat on the river's further bank, the old town climbing confidently into the castle's arm; the hundred gardens with their fruit-trees, broidering the valley; the two spires of the white Neukirch with its gleam of graves down by the water-side, that sets final seal upon the valley-vista ere flood and fell and forest disappear; the warm, sheltered air, the perennial sun; the blue-grey smoke that seems for ever rising like incense from

the happy roofs to tinge the vine-clad heights with a purple haze : all these, the unchanged wont of ages, make Vianden an amphora which has never lost the fragrance of its vanished wine. In the naïve rusticity of the people the golden past lives on. This little commune of two thousand souls was once the capital of a County and the residence of a brilliant court ; and you can feel all that. The spirit of place, as Mrs. Meynell would say, exhales from the soil and bathes the spot with character inalienable. "*Tout paysage est un état d'âme.*"

It was this spirit that Victor Hugo, impregnating it with the virile poetry of his own, made fruitful in the thunder of the *Châtiments*, the ardent rêverie of the *Contemplations*, the old-time glamour of the *Légende des Siècles*. From his window by the river he must have seen, wandering by night through the castle ruin, the shades of Barbarossa, Job, and Hatto. The great poet loved Vianden, and often wandered thither, ere tourists were. "Andernach", and "Bacharach", he called it. "*J'aime votre charmant pays ; j'y reviens pour la seconde fois, j'y reviendrai encore.*" Once, in 1871, he was driven forth, and came there for solace. The people loved him, elders remember him still, a familiar venerable figure with his two little Scotch-dressed grandchildren Georges and Jeanne, the friend of young and old, helping once with septuagenarian might and main at a bad fire, black and drenched, and then lavishing anonymous help upon the victims ; known to be a curio-lover, and so loaded with old chairs and coffers by the peasantry, with which, as skilful a carpenter as rhymester, he decked his little house by the river. When he was gone, the burgomaster sent him a door ; a thing of cunning carven work, spoil of the old convent of the Trinitaires. "*Vous êtes des apôtres fervents de l'art,*" he said to the people ; "*une si magnifique nature mérite d'inspirer vos talents ; votre belle musique est digne de votre beau pays.*"

That little house of his is passed, even now, almost with a reverence. It stands at the corner facing the old bridge that leads up the steep single street, hanging over the river its tumble-down balcony heavy with creeping flowers. There is his window, where in the evenings he sat and read aloud to his family, or turning tables evoked the shade of Charles Hugo lately departed. There the women, bringing their wares into the town at daybreak on market-days, saw him standing before his desk in long white blouse, writing ; materialising upon the strings of that manifold lyre of his genius, that has won him a world's citizenship, the spirit of the scene he loved. There he began the trilogy *Quatre-Vingt-Treize*, which he was never to finish, catching the awful picture of the tower "La Tourgue" from the donjon on the height. There too he completed his *Année Terrible*, writing thence to a friend, Paul Meurice, dated June 19th, 1871 : "*J'ai beaucoup travaillé. Tout s'est sinistrement agrandi. Je crois que cela fera bien en volume. Paris combattant ne suffit plus. Le livre s'appellera 'L'Année Terrible' ! Il commencera par 'Turba', il finira après avoir traversé la chute de l'empire et l'épopée des deux sièges, par la catastrophe actuelle, d'où je ferai sortir une prophétie de lumière.*" It was in the beautiful quiet of this valley that he finished this work, while waiting for Paris to recover herself, for the Commune to become history. For living pictures of Hugo, one should talk with the gaffers of Vianden.

A tiny railway from Diekirch, running along the road, joins Vianden with the world ; a little St. Gothard with its loopings, quite an adopted part of Vianden's elder charm. The epicure who would feast upon the fresh sweet place and go through with it in the right prandial spirit, should get out of the train at Roth, and walk. Scattered round two mountain-bases withinside the wheeling Our is the Prussian village, a box of painted toys turned out on the height and

tumbled pell-mell to the bottom. On the second height, hard by the castle that caps the velvet slopes, is the little old church of the Templars, St. Willibrord's superstructure, they say, upon Roman ruins, but set apart to Templar service in early thirteenth century by Count Philip of Vianden, to pass, a hundred years later, into the hands of the knights of St. John of Jerusalem or of Malta ; these kept it till the Revolution. In this precinct all is old and old. The church is in Germany, ranks as a house—"No. 47" decorates the door. A green old cemetery encloses, sweet, still, fertile. Among the low tomb-crosses of dead Templars stands their tall stone well that still supplies the castle near by—an unpleasant notion, but the good old knights are osseous ; and the gigantic, Byzantine Christ in stone, from Vianden castle, round which the children pray on their days. Near the well the stonework of the apse is Roman ; a grinning heathen mannikin in stone, twelve feet from the ground, is cemented to the masonry ; and just within the gate, exulting in its green, stands the lime-tree, more than seven yards round at man's height, planted by Willibrord. Within the church, through whose jumble of styles the original basilica speaks plain, are old carven glories of confessional, stall, and pulpit, Templar tombs in the floor and Templar vestments and banners in the sacristy, a queer gaudy painted box of jingles hanging high at a rope's end in the chancel for Sanctus-summons, and behind the altar a deep dark tunnel leading, it is said, to a Templar's castle at some distance called Poschet ; which astute knights, says legend, were wont to shoe their horses the wrong way, so that on leaving home they made homeward tracks, and vice versâ.

Pass now by the waterfall beneath the castle, along the sweeping cliff-road between the vine-slopes and orchards that lead on into the Grand Duke's domains. Roth left behind, the Our takes holiday from landmarking, and just where

German heights look down on Grand-Ducal bases, near the ancient Trinitarian press-house, are three figures high-carven in the cliff. They are the successors of three demolished by the French. The story is that a Germano-pagan altar to the Three Norns or Fates stood here, goddesses of past, present, and future. Then Rome came, and the figures were left, but the spot was rededicated to Hecate Trivia—who has left us our word “trivial”, a common thing that may be picked up anywhere where three roads meet. Next appear the first evangelists of the land, who rechristen the statues Fides, Spes, and Charitas, after the three martyred daughters of St. Sophia in Hadrian’s reign. When the overflowing French scourge passed through, these were hacked down; since that time they have been replaced. Through all these changes the spot has ever been called *die drei Jungfrauen*; and folk-lore tells of a great black dog, that haunts the spot at midnights.

On slopes the road into the valley, past the low fir-nurseries and coquetry of pink little outlying cottages, until at length Vianden, stalking across its bridge and upward into the misty bosom of its hills, sets term to all. Here, if the Rambler would drink tea exceeding good, let him turn in to my friends Monsieur and Madame Enschedé; not forgetting to compliment the former on his boars’ heads, nor to give the latter an opportunity of airing her English; she is the kindest of women, and has, as she puts it, “a great feebleness for the British”. A little further on, and there, where the river parts valley from ravine, is no more any fear of flood; for between St. Nicholas and St. John Nepomucenus, who have power over the waters, what river could rise rebel? For fronting the bridge stands the old church of St. Nicholas; when half the bridge was a pont-levis, this church was built for the Roth Templars to serve the lower town; and upon the parapet of the bridge itself

stands the ancient statue of the bold Saint of Prague. All the world knows that this last, called here affectionately *Bomezinnes*, died a martyr to the seal of penance, was thrown into the Moldau in 1380 by order of the Emperor Wenceslas. Here he stands, in cotta, fur tippet, and berretta, holding the cross ;

“ St. John Nepomuck in stone,
Looking down into the stream ” ;

when he “ hears ” midnight strike, they say, he turns thrice upon his pedestal. The old Trinitarian convent-chapel, up in mid-street past the bridge, is now parish church. I like the inscription over the door. It reads thus :

ECCE VIANDANI PO	TIA CIVES	NUNT HAECOS
HAECQUE UNI AC TR	ORTA DEO	INO SIT SACRAP

This is meant for Latin ; it is more like hydrophobia. But its bark is worse than its bite, for the builders are the culprits. They have mixed up the stones, no doubt misled by the beautiful combinations *Potia*, *Trorta*, and *Haecos*. Move the third stone into the middle, and the couplet, if not Ovidian, becomes sense.

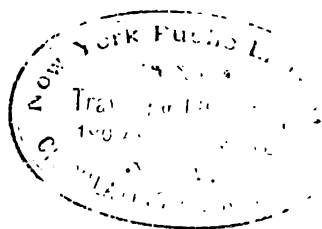
Before we round the top of the street, where the great tower and lordly triple muniment of machicolated gateways lead up castlewards, let us sit upon the steps of this tall “ Cross of Justice ” in the market-place just above the church, and piece together leisurely the town’s broken story.

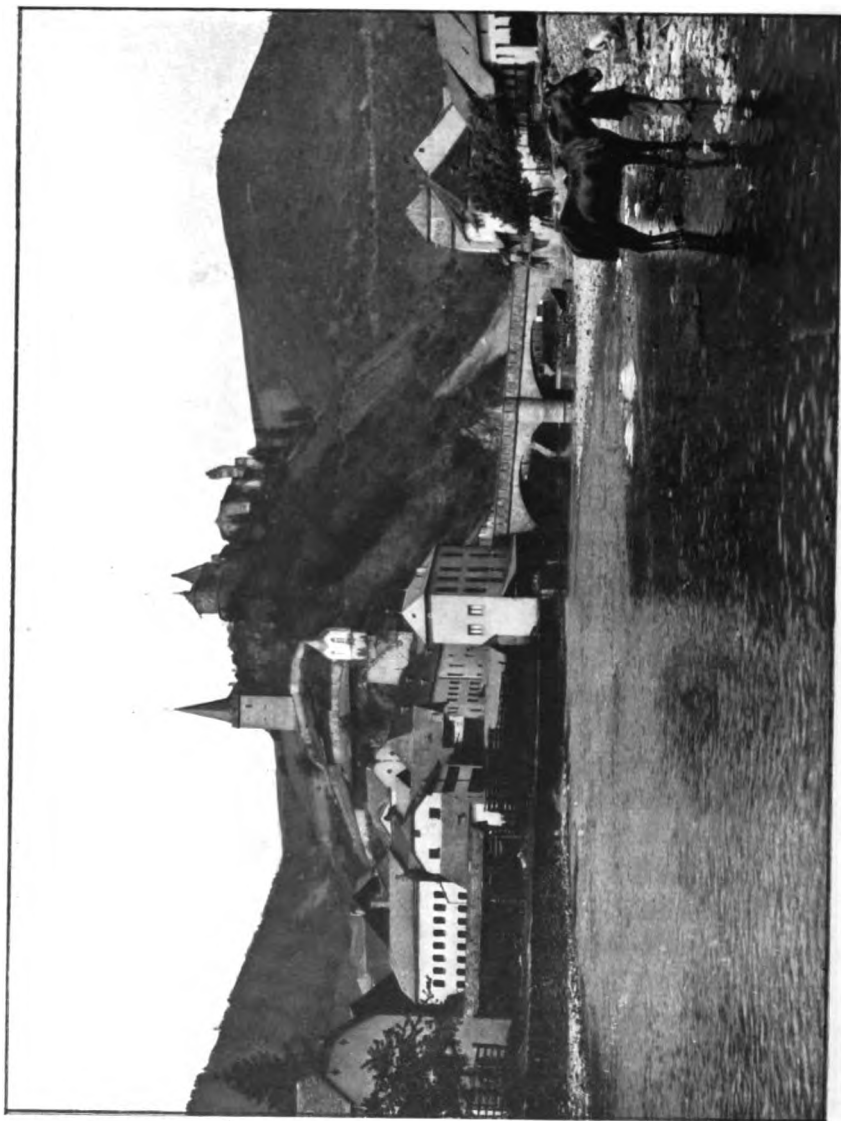
For Vianden has a history. To St. Irmine we owe its first mention as *Vienna*, when of her domains upon the Our she makes, to Echternach Abbey, donation of a vineyard “ *in monte Viennense* ”. It is from the Celtic *Vien*, rocky.

North of the village is an enchanting and enchanted little wood called Pôrbretchen—the sacred wood of Berta or Freya, Thor's mother, the moon walking in brightness. Here every step is a chapter in dark old German myth. Bertha the White Lady, foundress of the dynasty of Vianden's Counts, has ever walked here when a death drew nigh in the line of her seed. The village folk keep wide of the precinct, when dark falls; was she not seen but lately in her mist-chariot of four white horses, paler than the gibbous moon? Here too is Hidelbour, the Spring of Holda, scene of many a sacrifice to the "Kind Protectress" of the fields and boundaries. Opposite the castle is the Noell-Mountain, called of old Bels-berg, Baldur's (Baal's?) Mount. On its summit the Druids had an altar to the Sun-God. The worship is still carried on under a new name—for Belenus or Baldur, read St. Martin. The children of Vianden go hunting for bits of fuel on St. Martin's Eve, and carry them, chanting weird rhymes, to the summit of the mountain. There, stacking them round a high pole stuck in the ground, they fire them at nightfall, dancing with wild cries like young Baal-worshippers round the flames; then, lighting torches of straw, rush down into the village, a tornado of fire and song and pagan glee. In these and many like customs, the Æsir survive. The Norns have become the Trinity, and Valhalla has been refitted as Paradise.

Rome, the next stratum, escarps no less. The castle succeeds a Roman fortress, the foundations of the bridge are Roman; the first forges, the earliest vineyards, the old Kémchen-road to Ingeldorf, where a golden image of Nero was found, are all of the iron stock. Hunnenlei is there, the Hun's Rock; when Franks' turn came, they set up beneficiary counts over the *Gau* or *Pagus* of Viennense. These, at first subject to "sovereigns", became hereditary and independent in the person of Frederic I. about the

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VIANDEN

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middle of the twelfth century. The old Roman castrum had been replaced, in the ninth century, by a stronghold deemed of better avail against the invading Norman; "a fortress newly built upon a mountain in Ardenne", say the Annals of Metz, "supposed to be impregnable, where an immense multitude took refuge; yet was it taken at first onset, and all put to the sword, the barbarians returning to their fleet with great booty". By 1270 the castle had propagated a town, qualified as such, girdled with its stout loop-holed wall of four-and-twenty towers, a proud oval sweep, the great fastness its spring and goal. The town must have been snug and strong in its three hills' bosom, five-gated, like Mansoul. You can still trace, by imposing ruins, the cincture of wall and fosse all round; and half-way down the castle-mount, which is a Titan's shoe planted in mid-town, there yet rises that old square tower, Hockelstûr, which lorded it over the bridge-gate at shoe's toe; here was an unremitting guard, and all-seeing sentinel patrolling its covered gallery day and night; other monitors have supplanted them in the tower's head, the bells of the church. This belvedere-mannikin on the great green shoe is the eye of Vianden, its point of character far more than the castle above; look whence you will, it sets soul-seal on the place; and he who looks out from it, turn he which way he will, does not lightly forget. The low faubourg across the river, too, had its protections, northward and southward fosse, whose traces still remain.

Fortified as it was, this town won tardy part in the social movement which gave birth to Communes. It seems to have secured its rights at last by a sort of strike. The Latin charter of enfranchisement, dated 1308, is worth transcribing, for curiously enough it concedes to the burghers the right of insurrection against their suzerain. The same clause occurs two hundred and fifty-six years later, in the

“Joyous Entrance” of the Brabançons, attributable no doubt to the influence of the Counts of Vianden.

“We, Philip, Esquire, Count of Vianden, do make known by these presents, that lest by any means past happenings be forgotten, we have deemed it our duty to confirm them by the authority of our letters. Wherefore we declare that after mature counsel had of men of good counsel, we have promised and do promise by our oath to our burghers and to the whole commonalty of Vianden, to accord unto them a freedom stable, lawful, and inviolable, whereby they shall enjoy the same privileges which the burghers of Trèves do hold in their town, and that irrevocably. Saving only that whenever any of us shall be made knights, or shall marry our children, or shall (which God forfend) in the defence of our rights or heritage be taken prisoners, it shall be permitted us to exact from them a just and reasonable subsidy.

“All these matters . . . we have taken oath to ratify and to observe inviolate, and do hereby give our consent, that in case of contravention on our part, our burghers of Vianden shall be authorised to deny us their aid and succour.

“Made in 1308, the third feria before Saint Catharine.”

“Past happenings” reads significantly. The vassals had asserted themselves, it appears; hence this “lest we forget”. One can fancy some brawny farrier standing over Philip with the inkhorn. Anyhow, from this moment the bourgeois, in the persons of seven sheriffs and a *Schultheiss* or justiciary, administer their own affairs. A century later, a burgomaster appears. Here behind you to-day stands this Cross of Justice, from whose steps the sheriffs began to administer the laws. There was also the “Counts’ Court”, for the nobility, a body of eight Burg-Männer, who formed the Count’s bodyguard, living in turreted houses in the upper town; some of the houses are here still. Trade-guilds, to the number of a dozen, were not slow to arise upon the basis of the memorable document aforesaid, armed, pious, emulators each of its saint. Mediæval officialdom,

in such a town, reached limits of elaborate pomposity which beggar conception. The nobles and freemen of Vianden had the right, in solemn processions, to carry a stick ; serfs had to content themselves with their beads. The town had its particular weights and measures, their right of usage in the gift of the municipal authorities. In mid-street stood the common oven, whose proceeds went to the convent ; the common brew-house, in the market ; in the town-hall, the common scales.

The hereditary Counts were devout, and much given to crusade. In the middle of the thirteenth century were inaugurated the two religious houses which were to play parent, so to speak, to ecclesiastical Vianden—the Convent of the Trinitarian Fathers in the town itself, and the Com-manderie of the Templars aforementioned. Count Henry founded the former in gratitude to the Order which had ransomed his father from the Saracens ; Count Philip, his successor, the latter. The immediate result was a violent quarrel on the question of local jurisdiction between the two orders, who finding they could not injure each other, turned upon the Count, their Frankenstein, and got him excommunicated neck and crop for venturing mildly to interfere with a suggestion. Eventually, however, the matter was settled, and the Trinitarians took charge of the upper town, while the Templars shepherded the faubourg.

The Vianden dynasty, for power, wealth, dominions, achievement, and great connexion, rivalled the Counts of Luxembourg. More than thirty seigneurs called them suzerain, fifty-two villages owned their lordship, their complexity of fiefs and fiefs-arrière would fill many pages, Emperors of Constantinople and Kings of France and Hungary were proud of their kinship ; abbey, convents, and cathedrals arose under their auspices, the chair of arbiter was deferred to them instinctively, and for their younger sons and

daughters an archiepiscopal or abbatial cross or so was ever forthcoming. Yet the male stock failed, in the fourteenth century ; and of the espousals of Adelaide of Vianden with Otto of Nassau sprang John, source of the illustrious house of Nassau-Vianden. It is thus that the modest hamlet in far Ardenne becomes the cradle of a living Queen, Wilhelmina of Holland ; as also of Adolphe de Nassau, present Grand Duke of Luxembourg. Four-and-a-half centuries the powerful Nassau house reigned in Vianden. Of this stock came the famous William the Silent, founder of Dutch independence and implacable foe of the Spanish Philip who filched his country from him, and great-grandfather not only of the first King of Prussia, but of William III. of England. The Principality of Orange had been absorbed into the house of Nassau in 1530 ; and the English king's title was William Henry of Nassau-Vianden, Prince of Orange ; thus this emerald of the Our once shone, a titular jewel, in the British crown.

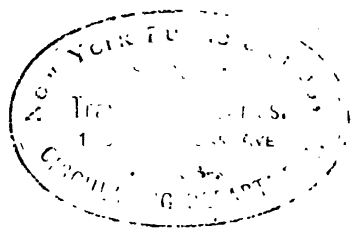
But the waxing of the house was the town's wane, for wider interests involved other residence. When the banners of Vianden and Nassau blended, the family moved, and the borough began to decline. It is now dwindled to a fraction of its mediæval population. Nor has Nature, here so specious, justified her smiles by kindness. Landslip and pestilence, flood and fire, have with a curious fatality punctuated the centuries ; and of course Boufflers came in 1678 and helped. Twenty-four years after him another Frenchman, Lacroix, occupied the town for a decade and wrought, with his corps, such nameless horrors that to this day the people, if they would abuse a man, can call him no worse name than *Lacroix's Bagage*. Next came 1794, when the tornado of revolution blew fifteen thousand armed men into Vianden and kept them there ten days. Where they can have found room, Heaven knows ; in any case, their behaviour

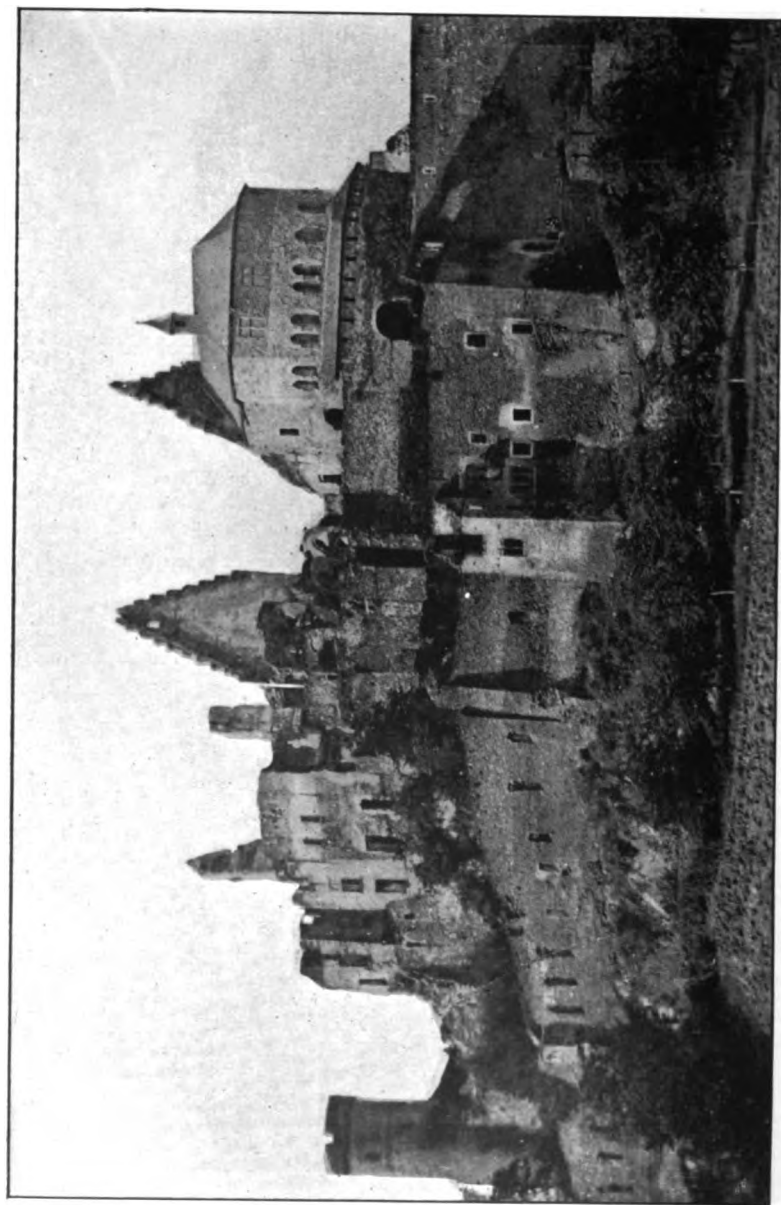
was regulated from the other place. When the blight rose, Vianden's glory was gone for ever, and from the capital of a great County it was become just a village in the "Department of Forests". How degrading! Later, it was thrown in with the Kingdom of Holland to Louis Buonaparte, who however returned it to his mighty brother. Napoleon then presented it to the Baron de Marbœuf; the Baron died childless in the Russian campaign, and the events of 1814 left Vianden the joint property of Prussia and Holland. In 1815 appears the Kingdom of the Netherlands and Duchy of Luxembourg under William I., Prince of Orange-Nassau-Vianden, whereby Fortune's wheel brings back the patrimonial castle to its rightful lord. The Our, forming the boundary between the Grand Duchy and Prussia, would have deprived William of half the town; so it was settled by the Treaty of Vienna that the borough should overhang the river to the full extent of its suburbs.

Now one would have thought that the troubles of the venerable castle were over; that it would be pensioned off into an honourable senile peace. It had escaped Boufflers; it had escaped the Revolution; it stood in all its glory, battered but unshent. But the survivor of a thousand years of war and weather was reserved to the avarice of one miserable tradesman. In 1820 the proud eyrie on the mountain was sold by auction. For about £270 it was knocked down to one Wenceslas Coster, a native of the town, who coolly set to work to pull it to pieces. The lead of the roofs, the carven stone-work, the magnificent oaken doors, wainscots, and panels, the windows, the beams, the clamps of cunning-wrought iron—everything that was capable of removal this Hun tore away, and sold in all for six times the price of purchase. King William—to whom, in justice to Coster be it said, he offered to sell it before demolition—

had plainly forgotten that he was descended from the ancient Counts. So a cry of grief and shame went up from Vian-den ; but the gales and rains continued the work of Coster for thirty years, until Prince Henry of the Netherlands, vice-regent for his royal brother, who had some spark of ancestral pride, began to frequent the ruins, and ended by restoring the chapel. This melancholy history of heartless neglect is no exception. No country has more old castles to the square mile, or colder contempt for them. The owls and the bats are the custodians of these ancient demesnes, and the inquirer may ask of them, for all that human lips can tell him. Still, the evil is not unmixed, for it means freedom from those somewhat trying persons who are generally domiciled in ruins to prose for a *pourboire*.

The castle was once, it is clear, one of the most imposing and impregnable in Europe. To describe it in minute detail would be tiresome. The great Gothic porch with its four pillars ; the room called Yolande's prison, where Countess Margaret shut her daughter up for refusing a brilliant match, and whence she escaped to become Abbess of Marienthal ; the dining-hall with the vast hearth of the banquet-hall above, suspended high in air, adorned with the sculptured arms of Nassau—the three roses and two figures leaning on a pitcher, glass in hand ; the gracious promise of arrested arch-spring here and there, the Romanesque gateways, the frowning prison-tower and dreadful *Hèxalach* or sorcerers' hole, the vast cellar with its double nave, the deep legended well into whose sparkling water, far below the Our's level, a dropt stone seems as though it were never going to splash ; the beautiful Byzantine hall littered with the sudden crash of masonry ten years ago ; the way of the sentinel round the arrogant ramparts ; the *Salle des Chevaliers*, of notable vastness, in which five hundred men-at-arms could foregather to convivial *fête* or council of war, with its towering traces





VIANDEN CASTLE

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of four stories, great square windows, broad hearth-places at either end, and tall naked far-seen chimney-fragment flaunting heaven like a mast; the occasional glimpse, through some breach or casement, of the exquisite deep dædal bay of shining river and fruitful upland: round and amid all these rise vanished Nassau-glories, ghosts of the generous old time thronging. Man never so justifies his passing pride as when he sets his throne upon a mountain. Israel's insolence was not deemed quite broken until the high places were taken away.

It is of the castle chapel that a word must be said more particularly. This lofty contour, uplifted high at end of the majestic chaos, forms as it were the rounded poop of the great ship-semblance. It redeems the mass from pathos. It is the feature that gives a smile to the whole. To the stranger who enters the valley from the south-east it makes Vianden homely, hospitable. Without it the ruin were grim, gaunt, dreary; it extends its kindly sanctuary to the town beneath in a spirit of consecration. This chapel is of the transition style of the early thirteenth century, and it is marked by a rare and interesting point of construction. It is ten-sided, and ten yards across; from its eastern part springs out a five-sided choir; the nave is lighted by five twin-windows, the sanctuary by five single, lancet, with columned embrasures without and within; around the walls under the windows run double arcades with cup-capitalled columns. You can make the whole tour of the chapel in a cloistered rampart outside, opening from the choir, and giving fairest glimpses every way.

But the strange feature is that in the centre of the decagon's floor is a hexagonal hole opening upon a bare subterranean dungeon. This opening is walled breast high all about, and set round with six pillars clustered with slender columns which match the ten at the angles of the walls, and

jointly with them support the ten arcs-doubleaux of the roof. All is symmetric, dainty, charming.

But the fact remains that the chapel's centre is a hole. What is it for? Archæologists have long asked the question. Some, quoting the "double chapels" of Kobern, Drüggelte, Burgen, Weilburg, reply that the retainers of the manor heard office from the crypt; others, that prisoners were brought there at mass-time, or hoisted up thence into the presence of their judges. Early mediæval and Romanesque "double chapels" are not uncommon in Germany, as at Eger, Goslar, Nurnberg, Lohra, Lansberg, Steinfurt in Westphalia; in nunneries the nuns took the upper part, the laity, mostly those belonging to the convent, the lower.

The real secret here lies probably in quite another quarter. We know that Count Frederic II. had devotion to the Holy Places; that he was taken prisoner by the Saracens at the end of the twelfth century and bought out by the Trinitarians, the Brothers of the Redemption of Captives, and that he returned to the home of his ancestors. Naturally, then, impressed with his visit to Palestine, as also with his happy deliverance, he would build this unadorned crypt upon the model of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre; naturally would his equally pious son Henry, who was himself a Crusader, deposit the sarcophagus of his father in the centre of the crypt.

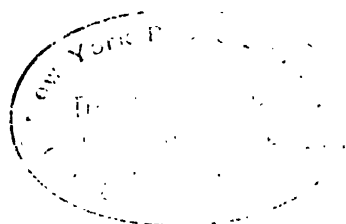
Of wild legend the castle has more than its complement. Its subterranean labyrinths are haunted by demons and the dead. There are deep caverns from whence, in the waste of the nights, you can hear the clink-clink of dice upon a marble table, and perhaps, if you dare the entry, catch a grey gleam of armour in the darkness. It is two knights who play, sitting at the table, uttering never a word. They are playing for their souls. At head of the table sits one watching them. The players are Count Siegfried of Vianden

and the Count of Falkenstein from across the northern mountains. To these sworn friends in arms nothing was more dear, after deeds of chivalry, than wine, women, and play. One night, after a feast in the castle above, the pair sat down to dice. They gained and lost by turns; with neither sat fortune. They grew warm. "May the devil take the man that first leaves the table", they cried accordant. Scarcely were the words uttered when from the flags of the chamber there issued a dense smoke, out of which the Enemy, his hand upon his heart, stepped politely, and bowing low intimated that he should be happy to oblige either of them to the utmost of his power. Since that night neither of the two champions will quit the table, not for fear of the devil—for what true knight was ever affrighted? but because a true knight never breaks his word. The devil, who has the misfortune not to be a gentleman, declines to believe them; and that is why he watches their play, and will watch, the wise believe, to the end of time.

Another tale, less unmeet for bedtime, concerns two nobles and a hat. In the far past Vianden had a Seigneur who, being *sans foi ni loi*, could not live at peace with his peers. He had fallen out with every neighbouring knight save only the canny Lord of Bourscheid, upon whom, try as he might, he could not fasten quarrel. This so nettled him of Vianden that he swore his downfall. Fair means failing, he tried foul. Paying a morning call at Bourscheid, he showed himself so affable, that his host, too noble-minded to suspect perfidy, promised to return the visit at an early date. The time came, Bourscheid arrived with his retinue, and was welcomed to a splendid banquet. In the servants' hall the henchmen and men-at-arms drank deep, as did their lieges in the banquet-place above. The fellows, flushed with wine, vaunted each the prowess of his master. "My lord", cried a page of Bourscheid, waving his beaker above

his head, "is the most accomplished knight in Christendom". "It may be", ironically quoth a drunken varlet of Vianden, "but wherewithal shall that serve him to-morrow? this night he shall meet death at our hands". The boy's first impulse was to cudgel the knave; but he mastered his anger. Feigning to take it as a jest, he found opportunity to steal out to the stables, saddled his master's horse and his own, and then, making his way into the dining-hall, whispered word to his lord. The knight found some pretext to quit his host, joined his faithful servitor, and the two left the castle at a gallop. Ere they were past the last pont-levis the vigilant lord of Vianden espied them from his lofty windows by the light of the moon. With a burst of scornful laughter he shouted into the valley, "Dear Monseigneur, you have forgotten your hat!" whereupon the wily fugitive called back answer, "Better lose hat than head."

Yet another story is told, an uglier still, which would seem to fit this anonymous lord. In the parish church of Vianden is the monument of Marie de Spanheim, who died in 1400. At her feet couches a greyhound, which has a tale. Godfrey III., Count of Vianden, having lost his wife, sought distraction in the Crusades. Before departure he confided his county and his two daughters to a chevalier upon whom he believed he could rely. Godfrey died in Cyprus, and the unknighly traitor he had trusted determined to seize his estate. For the furthering of his designs he asked the hand of the fair Marie; who, being already affianced to the Count of Spanheim, indignantly refused him. In revenge he threw her into a dungeon to starve. But her faithful hound discovered her, and brought her food. One day her lover arrived unexpected at the castle, and asking for his betrothed was told that she was unwell. Days passed, bringing no Marie. The young Graf's suspicions flamed up. Wandering one morn-





GATEWAY IN VIANDEN CASTLE

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ing in the corridors of the castle he encountered the dog, who whined and fawned upon him, as though wishful to lead him somewhither; he followed, and found. That same night the Count von Spanheim challenged the wicked chevalier and killed him; nor were the glad espousals, in the manor-chapel, slow to follow.

All the vicinage is as badly haunted as you can desire. Near Bettel is a little wood, the home of a malign spirit, called Lémènnchen, whose sport it is to play tricks on dark nights. If a peasant of particularly pious life and conversation pass through his domain, he will cry out of the darkness "This way, please!" "That way, please!" the end being that the unfortunate paragon will come into cranial contact with a tree or find himself contemplating the welkin from the bottom of a ditch. Then the sprite laughs. One night, not long since, a burgher of Roth passed that way. As he was returning from a kermesse, he feared no evil; and when the hobgoblin cried "This way, please!" he replied "Silence, fool! I know the way better than thou". Instantly an invisible hand struck him to the earth, and to the day of his death five bald patches, upon the top of his head, bespoke the fingers of Lémènnchen.

Near the Huns' Rock, on a bare eminence nearly 500 feet above the Our, from which you can see Arlon, is a tall and famous lime-tree, whose leafy dome is a landmark for far and near. The tree is called Bauler-Kléschen, Little Hermitage, after the ruins of one which it overshadows. Here a treasure lies buried, if you could only find it. One distant day a letter came to the country from Vienna, which reported that an Austrian army, camped in a certain year in this place, had found it necessary to decamp so suddenly that the military chest could not be removed; it had therefore been buried nine feet deep at the spot where the tree's topmost shadow fell at noon. Unfortunately, as was re-

membered at the time, the tree that stood near the hermitage at the date named was not the present tree at all, but a predecessor; and, as no one knew the exact site of that tree, no one took the trouble to dig; so the treasure is there still.

If you climb the Ruomberg-bas (Roman Mountain), one of the heights that engird Vianden, you will find yourself in the long strip of Prussian watershed between the two companion-rivers Gay and Our, which run, like the two Erenz, a parallel race toward the Sûre. Here, as one mounts, height rises beyond height until at the borders of a frontier-forest a humid meadow marks the site of an ancient marsh. Strange sights and sounds have been met with here of nights, for this smiling prairie hides gruesome things; sorcerers were buried here aforetime. When the old convent of the Trinitaires, suppressed by Joseph II., was turned into a weaving-factory, the place after a time proved haunted. Did the master-weaver sit down to dinner, plates, cups, and bottles flew about in all directions. To lay the ghost, silver bullets were discharged about the room. This proving both ineffectual and costly, old horseshoe-nails were substituted; for everyone knows that such nails have every whit as much exorcising virtue as silver bullets. The manifestations, however, still went on. At last someone hit on the expedient of strewing the floor with fine ashes. This revealed footsteps leading to an old clock-case. A blunderbuss was immediately loaded to the muzzle with old nails and discharged at the clock, when there fell forward the body of a man, riddled. It proved to be a discharged servant, who having learnt Black Art on his travels had taken this means of revenge. The corpse was very properly, in accordance with orthodox practice in such cases, enclosed in an old dyer's cauldron and buried at midnight in this marsh above the ravine of Defendelt.

Another house still standing in Vianden was haunted by

a demon who rocked children to death. When the honest couple were asleep he would agitate the cradle violently until baby died of convulsions. Eleven successive infants perished after this manner, until at length the monotony of the thing began to tell upon the parents, upon whose sorrow-sharpened wits the idea finally dawned that it might be as well to provide olive-branch number twelve with a fixed cradle. This resourceful expedient baffled the evil spirit completely, and that untoward genius of the nursery was laid by the fasts and prayers of two Capuchins, who banished him for ever into this swamp.

Through the village-life of Vianden are woven strands of pious custom, shreds of an eld when fancy yielded faith warmer service. Faith never ages ; but fancy, her handmaid, was once a child. The old Germanic nature-cult, mixt with the spirit of the mystery-play, inspires at certain seasons these sedate children of the Oesling. Paschal-tide, ever the heyday of observance, is the pivot of the year. Upon Good Friday you may see, soon after daybreak, the river-bank swarming with the faithful, making their stations. From the old church of St. Nicholas at the bridge, along the base of the cliff by the seven ancient sculptured tablets of the Passion, then back by the path that mounts to the castle, and so to the parish church, they punctuate their way with twice seven prayers. The children carry thorny wild-rose-branches, decked with ribbands of all colours: from time to time they halt, crying "*Judas ! Judas ! thorn of the dog-rose ! after to-morrow comes the Pasch !*" All that day the children usurp the function of the silenced bells, announcing the hours of divine service with their rattles and piercing cries. On Holy Saturday they used to burn Judas, but they do it no longer. If, on Easter Day, a young girl present her swain with a black egg, that means that his addresses are rejected, or that she tires of him. But the chief rite

of Vianden is that of the Bildchen ; and I will tell its tale.

Walking northward through the wood Porbretchen, you come upon a little turreted chapel, facing a wooden crucifix in a rose-planted enclosure. Were you entering the town from the opposite direction in the valley, you would see this chapel perched high in air, a splash of light upon a sea of green like a white bark tossed high among sky-scaling billows. Coming out upon it this other way it is just a modest little shrine on the skirt of a coppice, guarded by yet taller rocks, dreamless of eminence, peeping over wonderingly at the precipitous pageant of the foamy Our amid its retinue of fell and forest to Falkenstein. Before the door of the little temple leaps a sacred fountain, the Siloam of ophthalmia-victims far and near. Within is the old altar of the castle chapel ; and above the altar stands the Palladium of Vianden—the miraculous image of the Mother. Here you may see young girls of the village, praying for husbands ; and many a spray of golden broom and purple blooming heather you will find here, pilgrim-gifts of propitiation or of gratitude. Above the door is an Eye, with the legend

PROFER LUMEN CAECIS
MALA NOSTRA PELLE

A sensitive soul can feel the venerable sanctity of the spot. This quiet thicket of the height, once pale moon-Berta's woodland haunt, is now a benigner Lady's sanctuary. The story of the dynastic change mounts the giddy ladder of nine hundred years.

It happened that towards the end of the tenth century some children, keeping their goats in the mountains near Viennense, were gathering dead wood to make a fire. One of them, perched upon an old oak-tree, found among the

branches a little ancient wooden image of the Virgin. He threw it down to his companions, who unthinkingly dropped it in the fire. Presently they noticed that it would not burn, but seemed to grow every moment more whitely-shining, like a star in the midst of the flames. The children were afraid, and running home told their parents of the thing. A number of persons came at once to the spot and saw for themselves that it was even as the children had said. Someone ran for the priest. The marvel was lifted from the fire which was still burning, and solemnly carried to the church, where it was exposed for the veneration of the faithful.

The next day brought a new wonder ; the statue was not to be found. Sought on all sides, it was at length discovered among the boughs of the oak whence it had been taken. The same thing happened the next night, and the next, until it was understood that Our Lady willed to remain in the spot she had chosen, and the image was accordingly left in the tree. The place came to be looked upon as sacred, pilgrims flocked to it with their offerings and prayers, and the renown of "Our Lady of Vianden" flew abroad. In course of time the oak gave signs of perishing for great age, so the Madonna was set in a niche of the rock near to it. There it remained until fifty-five years ago, when the present chapel was built with the gifts of the faithful. Upon the Sunday before the Feast of the Assumption the image is carried from the Bildchen, in a great and festive pomp with litanies, to the parish church ; there the people come visiting it from far and near until the Sunday after the Octave, when it is carried back to its place.

It is constitutionally impossible for an intelligent person, even though Anglo-Saxon, to regard with unmixed contempt any object or usage, however seemingly irrational, which claims the background of remote antiquity. Multitude of

years, if it do not always teach wisdom, confers a sort of reverendness. Did our countrymen, in their foreign travels, bear in mind this principle more carefully, I may be pardoned for thinking that one fruitful cause of "Anglophobia"—which is in part, being interpreted, Snobophobia—would be removed. As touching the story just given, it goes back less than half-way towards the true origin of the devotion in question. That devotion, *mutatis mutandis*, is hoary already where the tale begins. The legend of the Bildchen Madonna, so far as the finding of the statue goes, is verified by archaeological science. That science has demonstrated that images found anciently in solitudes upon trees or rocks had been placed there, in nascent days of Christianity, by zealous apostles of the Faith, with the view of substituting the saints for the gods; and the name of this wood, Bertha's Wood—clinches the feasibility of the ancient discovery therein of an image of Mary. Thus the old tale of the little goat-herds, with certain eliminations doubtless, is after all more than likely to be true.

Feudal Vianden has two scions, seated among the Our's vagaries across the hills: Proud-Tower and Falcon-Rock, Stolzembourg and Falkenstein. Of old time these two beetling manors, like proud eaglets brooding above the waste of forest, flashed salute to their mother. Now they, like her, are silhouettes of desolation against the clouds. It is the better part of two hours to trace hence on foot the two laborious loops of river that bathe their mountain footstools; yet as the bird flies they stand upon an arc of but three miles' distance, beckoning across the labyrinth in serene oversight of the stream. As to Stolzembourg, heaven knows what blue-blooded bandits herded there; they say that a score years ago the last of the line, a poor cowherd, used often to pasture his cattle by the waterside at foot of the lofty roost his sires had ruled.

The way leads northward by the quay past the Neukirch churchyard where the Roman forge once stood. Here a sudden turn, and farewell to Vianden ; for the river rounds the bend and village and castle are things of the past. The sudden ferment of the Our betokens a deep gulf where once maddened a whirlpool ; in the deeps there is a bell, they say ; its chime is to be heard on certain festivals, has been heard by some who have ears for these things. Several places have this same story ; the French in 1799 confiscated church bells, and in some cases priests and people hid them beneath the water. One wall of verdure, dark with brightness, stands barring the way ; a few steps onwards, and the fairy Perspective, most potent of all nature-spirits, waves it leftwards ; a second valley is wafted into sight, and, looking back, the chapel of the Virgin hangs dizzily from its aerial grove. Follows the magic of change on change, the valley breaks up, the road climbs to half-height, and the near and the far gleam into view together—Biwels village at foot, beyond, the diamond fastness of Falkenstein, holding court amid its vassalage of hills. At first glimpse the ruin, a rugged coronal upon the last of four thinly-wooded pyramids, seems redly to refract the light that falls in mystic emerald showers around it ; a focus of misty outlines, dim with that illusion of mock-distance a light-green horizon often conjures. It is nearer than it seems. But Biwels divides, and must be traversed ; Biwels, fair enough to look down on with its haphazard homesteads and little church like a fat white cat with tall poplar tail, but proving, on descent, pig-logged and filthy beyond Augean dreams ; where a ripening manure-heap, differentiated from the road in depth only, plays buttress before every house, and for certain exquisite moments the nursing of the nose takes rank with the saving of the soul. So, “the black minute’s at end”, the bridge is gained, and the opposite

river-path, labouring in faith, at length wins to the mountain of desire.

Here is desolation. The seeming pyramid has suffered a dromedary-change, comes down to the river-side bristling with colossal humps of naked crag ; the spiral climb through ascending forest is from solitude to solitude unending ; wide downs behind, as you mount, come out of hiding. The goal overhead is that tall round red jagged tower, softened erewhile by the mantle of distance, now wild and terrible in its serrated deformity, as though a single lightning-blast had cloven from haughty shoulder to secure foot and hurled the fragment thundering down the abyss. Yet it was from below that the bolt came—Boufflers the bane of fiefs ; and he must have been a climber sound of heart and head, for his victims lived in the world's upper stories. But we have won to the drawbridge, and two great friendly dogs come with acclaiming bark to apprise us that someone lives upon this cloud-ledge. Here it is proved true that men's evil lives while their good is interred ; for beyond two towers and a mass of rueful fragments there is little left of these Knights of the Falcon but a horrible dungeon or two, and stagnant moat whose conferva smells mediæval murders. Yet the sudden scene from the falcon's nest preaches the greater Good's wider triumph. It is all that a bird sees, as the bird sees it. It is an ordnance-map ; one must wheel in circles, brood falconwise on air, you would have thought, to survey the lie of land and river like that.

For you are throned above the apex of a spacious elliptical basin, set round with mountains whose hues, symphonies upon the diapason of the rainbow, are echoed in the flowing, flowing waters that come out of the southern distance to skirt the world with their hyaline circumference. The mountains are still, austere, *mornes*, but an arterial life breathes from this serious, eternal coursing of the waters,

as they wheel their spacious circuit earnestly, unvaryingly, neither fast nor slow, with a curious suggestion of service. Withinside their ambience and determining their orbit a massive promontory, planted in faultless semblance of a horsehoof, fronts the eye. If this cone were not deeply truncated, its top would cleave the plane of vision ; its green beheaded plateau and yellow stripes of cornland, falling every way, abase themselves with faint eminence, a raying centre for the whole realm of colour the eye rules. All the outer cestus of hills is Prussian ; the hoof-peninsula within the river's oval is Grand Ducal,—hemmed at further end by the straggle of Biwels, viewed from these battlements with secure nostril ; and far towards the south horizon, held at arm's length by the river's straightened escapade, mock-modest Bildchen insists as ever upon snowdrop-visibility from its forest-edge. Up river to the right, I know full well, the whip-like Our makes a twin circuit, that Stolzembourg may view the scene reversed. But that is of faith, which is here lost in sight.

Wild and dissolute birds of prey were these old lords of Falconispetræ, worthy of their blazonry, the Falcon on the Hill ; prodigal sons of Vianden, dangerous on the highways, their name a byword of truculence and dissipation to this day. The old stock soon ran out ; and every half-century or so saw a new change of Seigneurs, until Louis XIVth's troopers brought an end. Many a wild tale is told of the Falcon knights. Once a feud sprang up between the Seigneur of Falkenstein and his overlord of Vianden, which brought the former to a state of siege. Shut up in his fortress the Falcon long braved his adversary, until starvation stared him in the face. Capitulation was contemplated, when a serving-man informed his lord that there yet remained an ox and a measure of corn. The resourceful cavalier ordered the corn to be given to the ox in the

night, and the poor beast gorged itself almost to bursting. After its meal it was slaughtered, and the entrails thrown over the battlements. In the morning the besiegers, finding the stomach of the ox full of corn, concluded that the Falkenstein larder must be far from giving out, and, being as anxious as the garrison to bring matters to a conclusion, proposed peace—which was accepted.

Eight hundred years ago the Castle of Falkenstein was inhabited by a rich and powerful knight. He had lost his dearly-loved young wife in childbed, and all that remained of his heart was centred upon an only daughter, named Euphrosyne. Her he affianced, at the age of eighteen, to Conon of Bitbourg, a cavalier renowned for valour, virtue, and wealth, but of ill-favoured face. A betrothal-feast was made, and a great hunt crowned the proceedings. During the chase Euphrosyne's palfrey bolted. The young girl, feeling herself approaching a deep precipice, shut her eyes and commended her soul to God. Just as the maddened horse was nearing the rocky verge, an unknown chevalier, young and good to look upon, sprang to her rescue, and seizing the bridle caught her in his arms. Her preserver led her to the drawbridge of the castle; she prayed him to enter and receive the thanks of her father, but he would not. He was, he said, Robert of Stolzenbourg; hearing that, he was sure, she would not ask him a second time. The maiden then remembered the dread feud that existed between the two houses—a hate without truce or mercy, since the day when a Lord of Stolzenbourg had been taken prisoner by her own grandfather and hanged in chains.

But the two young people had fallen in love, for all that; and I am sorry to say they did not fail to meet again, under the rose, many times. The day fixed for the wedding of Conon and Euphrosyne drew near, and the latter, having come to the end of all her pretexts for postponement,

forgot her God, her duty, her father, and her betrothed, yielded to her lover's burning instancy, and promised to fly with him. One night a tall cavalier upon a black horse presented himself at the secret postern in the ramparts of Falkenstein. The gate opens noiselessly, and a cloaked form, betraying girlish outlines, emerges from it; she is lifted in front of the knight upon the charger, and the two make off at full speed into the darkness. But not unobserved. Conon of Bitbourg, who has noticed a strangeness in the behaviour of his fiancée, and, unable to sleep for anxious love-thoughts, is leaning from his window, has espied all. Now he has flown to rouse his host. With a deep dread oath the Master of Falkenstein strides to the stables; the household is in full cry, the sleepy castle opens eyes of light from every window, the portcullis goes up with a crash, and ironclad hoofs clatter off in furious pursuit. Half-way down the mountain pursuers and pursued meet in fierce encounter; to Euphrosyne her companion tosses a poniard; unrecognising in the darkness, she stabs her father to the heart. While Conon, disarmed by horror, falls to care for the dying man, the two make off once more and soon reach the river-bank, where a bark is waiting.

But now, a horror! scarcely has Euphrosyne set foot in the boat, when a sudden unveiling of the moon lights up her companion's face. The blood freezes in her veins, for it is the face of Satan in person; a tuft of flames sits above his vizor's crest, and his armour glows hideously with the hell-fire. The young girl falls with a shriek upon her knees and makes the sign of the cross upon her breast. "*Paricide!*" cries the spectre, pointing at her with lurid finger; and that instant the bark melts into nothingness beneath her, the terrible ravisher vanishes, and the rushing waters of the Our open and engulf all that is mortal of the fair

and false Euphrosyne—an outward sign of the deeper abyss that receives her guilty soul. I may add, for the benefit of the unimaginative, that those ringing hoofs are still heard descending the steep mountain-path in the waste of nights ; that at this spot, mingled with the whisper of the Our, there wells up at times the sound of sobbing ; and that upon a certain night of the year is to be seen flitting among these grey ruins, wringing wild hands and sprinkled with a father's blood, the woeful wraith of Euphrosyne of Falkenstein.

CHAPTER XIV

FELS

MINE host Camille Tschiderer, of the Hôtel de la Poste at Fels or Larochette, is an interesting personality. Not only is he a cultivated and genial gentleman, known and respected throughout the land. He has a Saint in the family. About two hundred and fifty years have passed since his Tyrolese bishop-ancestor bequeathed the family patrimony to that ever-needy legatee, Religion. She, however, proved no ingrate, for she canonised him, inasmuch that he now adorns the heavenly galaxy as Saint John-Baptist Tschiderer. For this distinction, however, the Saint's descendants have been paying ever since ; for they are fallen from their first estate, and are now settled in this fair but frugal land, their only wealth the esteem and goodwill of all who know them. I mention this because, although I may have entertained angels unawares, I have never before had knowingly to host the scion of a Saint.

It is pleasant to arrive in this pretty hill-embosomed village, when evening is drawing down and the stars, like altartapers, are lighting up one by one. The moon has just shimmered into sight, a crystal disc of that peculiar tint which has in heaven or earth no name nor likeness, but would surely be opalescent, one fancies, could the sky catch fire behind it ; that large mystic peace or well-being, the charm of a village at evening-time, broods on the air ; and God is known in the breath of the woods, a complex frankin-

cense. A score of girls are come out to watch the arrival of the little train which has puffed cautiously down from Cruchten in noisy rivalry with the White Erenz—a thrice-daily dissipation. Each, as she chatters, knits industriously; their eyes are brown-blue; their hair, gathered with ribbon into a crowning knot, has entrapped the sun; we English are a dark race, but with these, until they are early aged with toil, is no darkness at all.

Two great grey rocks stand sentry over this Fels; upon the right rock clusters the fragmented castle, upon the left a fortress-tower glares answer. Each heads its hinder ridge of mountain, stretching away a double range of bulwarks that immure the trusting roofs between. Beneath and opposite to the double height the river, a slender thread, runs past; facing beyond, an amphitheatre of beeches, tier on tier, ensconces all. You may conceit that a couchant lion guards here, the old town lying snug between its great paws, the new part more boldly spread out beyond them. Or, it has been thrown and caught between a sitting giant's knees. The town lies in shape a "T", a nail of the cross, the headstroke turned downwards on both sides; the upright formed by the long nestling village of the valley, the cross-bar by the bowed overspread of habitations at the valley's mouth, one thronging crescent of river, road, and terraced verdancy. Just at the point of junction in the nail's head sparkles a little convent-garden, scarlet, pink, and dazzling green. One would think this quiet, rident village, looking down upon it by morning light from the watch-tower on the rock, a home of noon-dreams. It is in point of fact the cloth-making centre of the country. It provides clothes. As I lean down and listen, I hear the hum of looms. Now clangs the midday Angelus, and they have stopped dead, for that sacred summons is also luncheon-bell.

So, for at least a thousand years, the village has lain, for

it figures in a territorial document of the year 960. There was a day when the paws of the lion, fore and hind, were joined by lofty walls, gated and turreted. The walls ran down from the heights, and closed in the town on east and west, a snug oblong ideal of earthly safety. The Barons of Fels were distinguished; they quitted themselves nobly in Crusade; in 1192 Henry I. of Luxembourg made the brothers Arnoult and Conon von der Feltz Bannerets or Banner-Bearers of the County, which office became hereditary; in 1402 the Emperor Wenceslas granted the Barons right of coinage. In 1683 Frederic von Fels, field-marshal and governor of the Duchy, won glory in the defence of Luxembourg; in requital, the French bombarded and destroyed his domain with a selective taste and scenic discrimination which has won them the gratitude of modern artists.

An unsavoury story is told of the death of a later baron, Ludwig von Fels. In 1782 the fortress of Luxembourg was occupied by Austrian regiments. One of these, being Protestant, was unpopular with the rest. A military banquet was given in the city; someone proposed that each guest should contribute various dishes, to be brought in by their servants in disguise. Half-way through dinner two masked servitors, with immense pomp, stalked into the hall, bearing between them a colossal pie adorned with flowers. After the company had exhausted their praises, the host proceeded to stick a knife into this culinary masterpiece. No sooner was the breach effected than a stench unspeakable filled every corner of the room. The guests, handkerchiefs to noses, started from their seats; the pie, it turned out, contained a pheasant in an advanced stage of putrefaction. Up started Louis, Baron of Fels, and gave it as his opinion that the Kaunitz regiment was at the bottom of the outrage. An officer of that regiment flung back the insult; a duel

ensued, and the Baron was killed. The only descendants of the family living to-day are the Barons Van der Feltz in Holland.

Larochette claims the usual innocence of any notion of landscape-gardening. Lime-trees obscure the market-place, and the high ruin is grown a very Rip Van Winkle for hair of ivy and beard of countless leafage. The ivy is a vesture regal for age and beauty, but in the case of so noble a ruin one would prefer "the altogether". The aged castle cleaves to the rock by leave of fir and beech and pine, whose roots are deadlier foes of masonry than any French mines. Beside the stately tower of entrance with its bridge and double archway stands the farm of the "gardien", whose Dorkings, a handsome brood, play peacock in the vast courtyard. This latter, now a small Himalaya, was once level; the stars have seen all Fels, with its goods and cattle, file in across the lowered drawbridge and huddle here for safety. That great empty shell, the donjon, has an almost perfect façade, in whose high midst hangs the chapel-apse with its suspended piscina and aumbry, its Gothic columns and mouldings; this great sheer wall overhangs the town, is like to fall, will work sad havoc when it falls. The old bell of the chapel is in the parish church; it is tolled at the death of a child. Within this donjon is the well, nearly two hundred feet in depth, and in legend as deep. The young châtelaine who threw herself down this well with her child to escape the brutality of the besieging Templars in the thirteenth century; the two brothers who, in the fourteenth, did the same, after refusing to open the gates to Count John of Bohemia; the rock-grotto at the bottom of the well, where the seigneurs hid their treasures during the many sieges; these and other strange tales are told of the well of Fels. About seventy years ago a young girl, in drawing water, found a gold ring in the bucket; but beyond the

bones of a child and some old iron, that is all that has come to light ; for unfortunately the treasure is guarded by a dragon, who, when anyone is so foolhardy as to attempt exploration, first blows out his candle and then devours him. Every year, at midnight before Maundy Thursday, the Grand Master of the Templars rides in the ruins with his knights ; a Catholic in a state of grace can see them quite plainly from below, moving about amongst the trees.

Beneath the castle is a romantic little gully, which is known by the name of *Verlorenkost*. This means "The Wasted Dinner". Anciently a bridge spanned the chasm between the two promontories, connecting the watch-tower with the castle. Northwards, in the castle, some improvements were being carried on by a workman who lived on the southern side. Every day he crossed the bridge to his work, and returned in the evening. At noon his wife brought him his dinner. To save her trouble, he would start from his end of the bridge when he saw her coming, and meet her half-way. One day, when both had started, the bridge collapsed in the middle, and the man was killed on the spot. Now one might have thought the good wife would have grieved for her husband. Probably she did. But all she *said* was, "The dinner's wasted !"

Larochette is particularly loyal to the Nassau house. Its terror is a German succession, in the absence of a Grand-Ducal grandson. So far, the appearance of a granddaughter is an event of monotonous regularity in the Ducal house. It is an old custom to fire a cannon a hundred-and-one times when a boy is born in the reigning family ; for a girl, twenty-one times. The last time a little Walramian girl entered this vale of tears the final shot was omitted by mistake. A man and a boy of Larochette were anxiously listening, and counted twenty booms. Then the boy waited open-mouthed. The silence became oppressive.

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At length, turning to his sire, he exclaimed, "Why, father, it isn't even a girl!"

The Kermesse is held for a fortnight in July. The reunions and kissings are entertaining to witness. A "circus" comes, consisting of a horse and a pony. A licensed beggar—a great curiosity in the Luxembourg—appears from Medernach village near by; a dwarf, who recites Paternoster all day. From Medernach, too, come Jews to market and fair, professionally poking the pigs and cows; to conclude a bargain, they strike their hands together thrice; twice means that they are not buying. The bargain is invariably ratified with a glass of *pecqué*, would be invalid without. Medernach—a Roman centre where a beautiful mosaic was found—is a Jewish colony because, being richly wooded, its dues to the State are paid partly in kind, which saves the son of Abraham about fifteen shillings yearly. He goes to church regularly, and his children go to Catholic school.

You do not see sheep in Fels. When by some rare chance they are brought to the town, the sensation produced resembles that which might be caused by the appearance of a dodo on Ludgate Hill. The children tug at their wool, jump on their backs, and so overhaul them generally that Rara Ovis is glad to shake the dust of Larochette from her trotters. *A propos* of trotters, the airing of the pig is curious. A professional pig-usher calls weekly, takes the porkers out for exercise and pasture, then returns them to their different owners. It is not uncommon, on a country ramble, to find a whole road, to vision's limit, pink with pigs. It is a pork-school, out for a walk.

Let us follow White Erenz northward from the castle height, for I have a story to tell you; past the dainty white cottages that take toll of her one by one, whose plashing wheels she laughingly spins as she eddies through their gardens, for upon this golden morning she is full of love to all

her world. A thousand pities that the dregs of her labours have killed the crayfish and driven the trout and grayling, disgusted, upstream. Underfoot the lilies of the valley shroud the earth like a snowfall ; on this side and on that, where fir-layers slope up skyward, the sun plays his colour-symphonies upon the infinitely-delicate gamut of green. I cannot help recalling, as I wander about this world of fir and odorous pine, that phrase, so curiously sad, they use of a man who nears his end and knows it—" *Il commence à sentir le sapin.*" Here upon our left a baby babble answers Erenz ; it is the brook Osterbour, capering down from the height. He who has seen this rivulet has seen water. Follow a stream upwards, and it cannot lead you to less than beauty ; following this, we find ourselves in a narrow dark ravine, threading our way through a long fir-forest, walled with rocks. Then, daylight again, and a large, clear lake ; on its surface, water-lilies and flags ; in its depths, carp. Is the stream born of this lake ? No ; for a few paces beyond its further margin, and lo, another lake—its counterpart ; in whose bosom trout enliven a mirrored serenity of trees and crags. Between the two meres, from weir to weir, courses a narrow, noisy, silver channel, the feeding brook that flows, Gulf-stream-like, through both. Beyond the further lake, again fir-darkness, and no brook to be seen or heard ; only the crackling reddish carpet, void of ground-growth, that always paves a fir-wood—why will nothing green grow under firs ? and the long ruddy whisk of the squirrels, startled, that love the cones. The burn, faith says, is here an Alphæus, coursing underground. On, straight on, till faith's reward appears, the visible sparkle of our Bandusia caught in the act of burrowing. There remains but to track its gambols over mossy stones—and now, hail the source, *splendidior vitro* ! from under a shelving bay of ferny rock it gushes like a jet of opals, a shaft of sun through the forest's interlacings

assisting at the very birth. Where is the visionary peasant-girl, adoring upon her knees, with wide, fawn-like eyes "blind with sight", the revealed, benignant Mother? It were strange if such a spot, so Immaculate a Conception of the water-element, had not its story; and here is the story of Osterbour, the Easter-Fountain.

It is the thirteenth century of our redemption. Good Baron Ludolf, in the castle on the height, sways Fels; at Beaufort, a few leagues to the north-east, reigns Baron Conan. A common sorrow binds the two in heart-friendship; their young wives have faded in their bloom. The châtelaine of Beaufort leaves a boy of three years, the Lady Margaret of Fels a girl baby who has cost her own dear life; the bitter-sweet souvenir is named Margaret by her inconsolable sire. Fête and tourney are banished from the two homes, whose lords seek comfort only in the holy offices of religion, and in their mutual company.

Four years after this, Pope Honorius, at the instance of John of Brienne king of Jerusalem, summons Christendom to the Holy War. The bereft barons find herein the hest of God; they bury their grief in the forests of its birth, set their domains in order, and taking the cross-hilted sword range themselves under the banner of Emperor Frederic the Second. Ludolf leaves his little Margaret to the charge of her grandmother, Dame Godeline, and of the chaplain of the castle, under protection of Gotfried, his faithful esquire; Conan commits the education of his son to the venerable Abbé, Father Siegfried.

Twelve years roll by. Boy and girl grow up as brother and sister, roaming the wildwood hand in hand; together they read the lore of God's wisdom in bird and beast and flower, together con the wondrous stories of the saints, and learn to illuminate, with the heavenly blue and the thick red gold, precious office-books for the altar, under the loving care of

Father Siegfried and Father Anselm. From time to time there comes a wandering minstrel, whose lay, an echo from the outer world, celebrates the doughty deeds of the soldiers of the Cross. Sometimes two loved names are woven gloriously into the song. Margaret listens with panting bosom ; she ceases not to dream of the brave father whom she has scarcely known. As to John, he is become a man. His mentor thinks of presenting him at the court of Count Henry of Luxembourg ; armed and made knight, what renown of chivalry shall he not win for his noble house ?

It is high summer, and earth is mantled with glory. The parting has taken place. Margaret wanders alone over the wooded rocks that surround the castle ; nature has lost half her charm. Resolving to stifle her sorrow in devotion and works of mercy, she visits the poor huts of woodman and serf, dispenses sweet charity, teaches the little children to pray. So pass the months, till autumn emblazons the leaves with gold. One day John, having learnt that the Barons are shortly expected back from the East, returns from the court, and passing a cottage in the forest catches glimpse of his beautiful playmate as she binds up the hurt of a poor forester, who has been wounded by the fall of a tree. There is a something in her face and attitude which is new to him. He stops entranced ; she is an angel, an aureoled saint ; he has seen with new eyes, a burning reverence surges through him from head to foot, he knows in an instant that the fulness of the time is come and that nothing in the world will ever be again as it has been of old. Among the brilliant ladies of the court of Luxembourg he has seen many an exquisite face ; but—this ! It is clear to him that all his life he has never had a soul, and had not noticed it.

Presently she passes out, and finds him standing spell-bound. With a little cry of gladness she rushes towards him ; then stops. Amid her joy she, too, has caught a strange

new quickening of the heart ; he is transfigured in her eyes, he is like St. George. Kneeling upon one knee he kisses her fair hand, calls her his pearl, swears to be her loyal knight till death ; she, too innocent even to blush, only bending upon him her limpid eyes, answers simply, "May the blessed Mother of God watch over our united hearts for ever !"

When two young folks of diverse sex come home from a walk with apotheosis in their faces, older folks draw conclusions. From the good Father Siegfried and Dame Godeline this newborn thing could not long remain hidden, though the lovers themselves, far from announcing it, were too little conscious even to define it to themselves. In the utter light of it they scarcely remembered that there had ever been any darkness. When one is born one does not proclaim the fact. It speaks for itself. Gladly the old châtelaine and the priest joined the plighted hands of the devoted pair, and exhorted them to hope and patience.

Meanwhile the news of the home-coming had filled Fels with joy. All the vassals assembled to receive their seigneur, and Margaret, her heart beating with expectant filial love, quitted not the parapet of the loftiest tower. At fall of day the sentinel announced the approach of a little troop of cavalry ; the drawbridge fell with a clang, and soon after the orphan, clasped in the arms of the war-worn old man, uttered for the first time the word "Father". The doors of the great Hall of the Chevaliers were thrown open, the faithful Gotfried and all the retainers were admitted to acclaim their lord, the loving-cup passed from hand to hand, and lusty shouts of "Long life to Monseigneur !" echoed from the vaulted roof till all the valley rang again.

And yet all was not well with my lord. A cloud sat upon his brow, and when he deemed himself unobserved it darkened to a frown. Margaret, in Paradise between two joys,

asked her father at what spot he had separated from the banner of Beaufort. For answer he rose to his feet, and in curt tones desired an attendant to bring flambeaux; the night was far spent, he said, the travellers broken with fatigue. Margaret, trembling, offered her brow to her father's kiss, and bade him good-night; and ere long the castle slept.

The following day Father Anselm informed Margaret that the two Barons, from bosom friends, had for some unknown reason become deadly foes; that Monseigneur of Beaufort must never more be named in her father's presence; and that she must forget her love, which was now hopeless, in prayer for her sire's imperilled soul. Obedience was the young girl's breath of life; she forced back her tears, shut up her heart, spent her nights before the Crucifix and her days in redoubled devotion to her father, who returned her affection, but continued gloomy and silent.

Winter drew on apace; the lover never came: Noel brought the snow, and Margaret grieved at her father's absence from the Table of God. Anselm, the ghostly father, had said, "If ye from your hearts forgive not——"; but Baron Ludolf had turned on his heel with a scowl. Matters at Beaufort were no better; Father Siegfried had prayed Lord Conan to go and offer his hand to his old friend, but Conan had sworn that he would die unshriven rather than be guilty of such a cowardice. As to John, he had lost his reason, had it not been for the kindly and sapient counsel of his old tutor, who urged him daily to prayer and patience.

Holy Lent came, then the Great Week, and aged Dame Godeline lay on her deathbed. *Elle commençait à sentir le sapin.* Her son and grand-daughter stood beside her, bathed in tears. "Go, child", said she to Margaret, "pray for me in the chapel; I would have speech with thy father." What

passed was never known. But when all was over, and the venerable matron had been laid in the resting-place of her ancestors, a change was observed in Ludolf. He made long stations at the tomb, and on Good Friday threw himself at the foot of the Cross, striking his breast and crying for mercy, passing the whole day in prayer and in confession with his spiritual father.

The next day he announced to Margaret that he must make a journey. She begged to accompany him; her request was granted, and together the old warrior and the maiden set out across the forest. They went on foot, for none mounts horse in the week of God's Passion. Spring's fairest flowers bloomed at every step, and birds in myriads hymned the Resurrection of their God; but the pair walked in silence. Margaret's heart was singing too; she knew Ludolf's errand, and Ludolf knew that she knew. They were a mile from the castle, when lo, from the opposite path, approaching them, the Baron of Beaufort and his son! The pair of Fels stood astonished; there was a full silence. Then "Conan!" cried Ludolf at length, "I was coming to thee!" "And I to thee", answered Conan with glistening eyes; and the two men threw themselves into each other's arms. Margaret's prayers had healed the feud and averted the sin. The tears of reconciliation flowed from the Barons' eyes upon the ground, mingled, and disappeared in a fissure of the rock. Their pride had melted as melt the winter's snows beneath the springtide sun.

Meantime, John advanced to meet his love. But he stopped, awed; for Margaret stood upon the rock as one transfigured, her hands clasped upon her breast, her eyes raised to heaven. She had burst forth in the holy canticle of praise, "*Benedicite, opera Domini, Domino*". When she came to the verse, "*Benedicite, fontes, Domino*," the two knights saw issuing from the rock, where their tears had

fallen, a thread of water, crystal-clear ; it bubbled forth into the sunlight, carved a little channel for itself, and flowed downward, leaping. The chevaliers, hearing and seeing, knelt upon the ground and responded *Amen*. At that instant the silver bell of the castle of Fels rang out most joyously, announcing Christ's victory over sin and death.

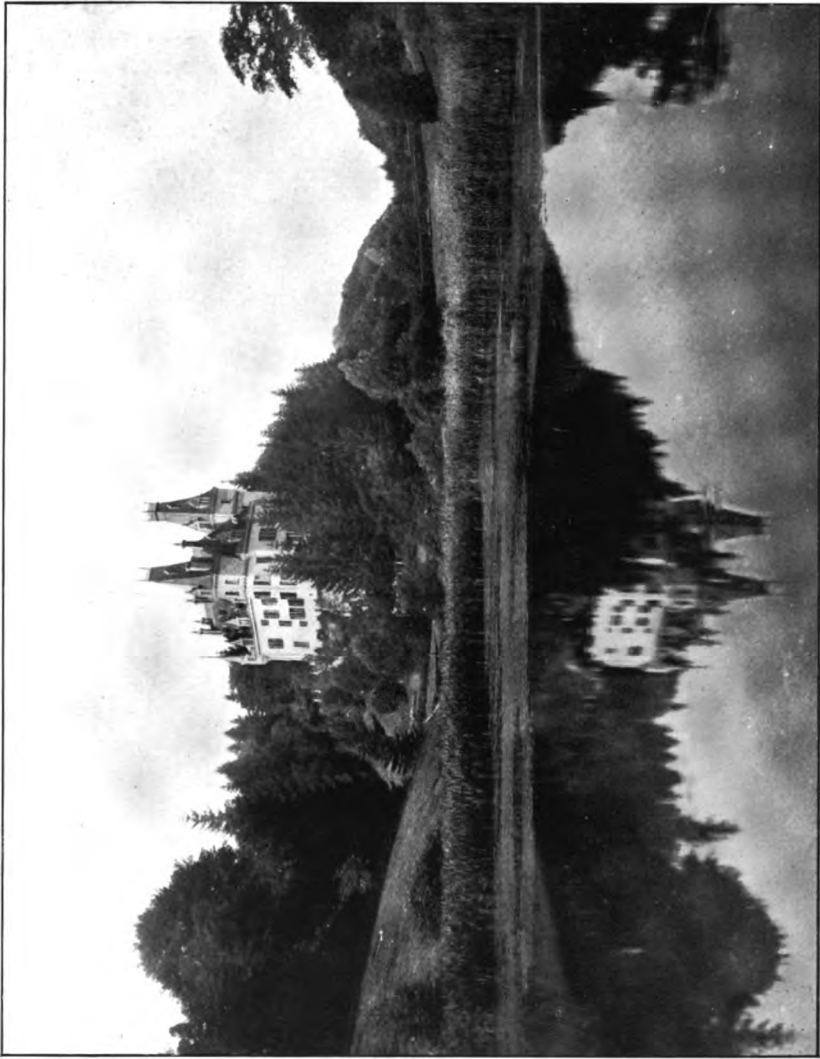
Such is the story of Osterbour of Larochette. "Blessed be thou, Fontaine de Pâques, pledge of the mercies of our most puissant Sire God, mystic water sprung from the tears of repentance ! Mayst thou bear with thee always the blessings of Heaven, and reconcile in sweet charity all who, being at feud, drink of thy gracious stream !" So mote it be, and so it has been ; for in the long after-ages many a broken covenant of friendship has been healed at this spot and sealed in a draught of this spring. I owe the outline of this story to the pious and gentle Mademoiselle de Roebe, present châtelaine of Larochette, who has reason to know what sorrow is.

Climb up out of Fels and walk over the broad brow of downs to Meysembourg, and you shall see as pretty a habitation as aught that mad King Ludwig, in his wilder way, conceived. Here, on high but in a hollow, seated on a rock and yet menaced by a rock, a thing of pinnacles and turrets, smiles the château of the Princess of Arenberg ; as unlike the battered and monstrous skeleton of Fels, as a stately Valkyrie to a dead and mangled Viking. Nature has made a sheltering cliff-chamber round this house, a broad silence of grey-green precipices broken only by the whisper of an invisible stream. From its deep height, like a giantess in her boudoir, the fair castle flirts with its image in a still, blue lake. You need not lift eyes to parapet and gable ; you may scan all in the water, tower for tower and stone for stone. Is this lonely, embosomed manor a mere

parvenu among the seats of the mighty? Nay, Meysembourg Seigneurie dates from the time of our Norman Conquest, was allied with the houses of Wiltz, Clervaux, Linster, has led forth many a time its serfs to war; where, then, is the nesting village here? Not a roof recalls that feud-time, not a spire of smoke plays ghost to the little old family of thralls that once foregathered under the shade of this still outspread wing. It is a sad little tale.

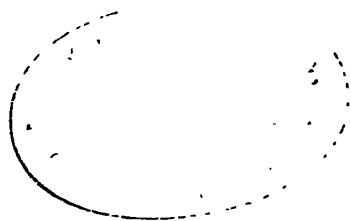
Not a hundred years ago, when Meysembourg was still a populous village, a heartless Ahab lived at his ease in this restored demesne. He was rich; had bought the place, and let the villagers know it. He harassed them, went to law with them, quibbled and quabbled with them about rights of way, and made things miserable for them generally. They could not cross the street without trespassing; if they would go to church they must walk in the opposite direction to get there; if they fetched in a cow from the fields they were sent round another way by a bailiff. Ultimately it dawned upon them that they were not wanted, which was exactly what this ogre was playing for. So they took counsel, packed up and emigrated, most of them to America, where they planted another Meysembourg, calling the new town by the old name. Then their little houses were pulled down, and parks laid out. Eventually this hunter of the poor sold the place to Prince Charles of Arenberg, who had married the relict of Michael Obrenovitch, the assassinated Prince of Serbia; which lady, now twice widow, inhabits the château. The village church is her chapel, kept closed; and beside this, there is not one stone upon another to record the fact that there ever was any other inhabitant.

Neighbouring and east of Fels is a humble little hamlet nearly as old as the hills, which merits mention. If you emerge from the southern end of the Müllerthal at Breit-



MEYSEMBOURG CASTLE

[To face p. 382]



weiler Bridge, leaving Black Erenz and all its bright darkness, and turn right, you are bound for Christnach, the old Crucenacum, a poor village where half the houses have Roman basements if you only knew it—the last people to know it are the inhabitants—and there is a fantastic old shrine or Pietà every yard or two, and the little church sits upon the débris of Diana's fane. "Crucenach" is found in a document of 752. Romans loved the spot, and would bring their offerings to Diana's temple there, until the barbarians came and took away their place and nation. In the sixth century arrived from Trèves the hermit Wulfilaicus with his preaching-men, and, daring a thousand dangers, wooed the environs of Larochette and Christnach with the Cross. There lived at that time, rumour says, upon the rock that gives its name to Fels, a Gallic chieftain, Rodoricus, whose castle was called Zorodertsbourg. He and his people, all zealous paynim, were wont to worship at the shrines of their national gods.

Now there was a noble German maiden, Schwanhilde, who dwelt with her younger sister Vallida in a great country-house near Crucenacum. Both, having made trial of persecutions, had given themselves to Christ. It came about that the fierce Rodoric cast hot eyes upon Schwanhilde, and would make her his. The Christian lady hushed her answering heart, and made reply that this could never be, save only if he should give up his low gods and be a Christian. Then Rodoric swore a great oath by Mars, or his equivalent, and took the brave girl and shut her up in a dark dungeon, where she languished for months; but though he came every day to the door and coaxed and threatened, she swerved not a hair's breadth from her former word. But he did not know she was praying night and day for his soul; for she loved him with all her heart. This was the touch of nature about Schwanhilde, and it

makes me prefer her to the general run of old-time saint-maidens, whose prude hearts were ice toward their pagan wooers. These unnatural ladies had no temptation to conquer.

Schwanhilde, then, lay in her prison and vowed that if ever she got free she would lay axe to Diana's forest and build a church there. One night the key grided in the wards of the door, and the headsman appeared. It seemed the axe was to be set to her own fair neck instead. The girl signed her breast with the cross, and commended her soul to God. But no sooner had the man-at-arms, who accompanied him, left the cell, than the executioner fell on his knees at her feet, confessing himself a Christian. He gave her a cloak, bidding her follow him through a secret passage which led to a mountain-top. There the maiden hid herself among the grottoes of the rock until the tyranny should be overpast. But neither here did she leave off from wearying heaven with her prayer.

When Rodoric heard, he was in a great wrath, and made search for his victim everywhere. One day, pricking moodily through the valley, he saw a group of peasants standing round a man in a long black robe, listening to him attentively. It was one of Wulfilaic's good mission-priests, preaching the Gospel. The chieftain drew rein, gave ear. It was of the new law of love that the preacher spoke; the Christ-power, mightier than the fleshly arm. So this was the new doctrine? The fierce Gaul was moved; he had never heard it on this wise. The Spirit of God came into the simple words and melted his proud heart. It was the fruit of Schwanhilde's prayer. He cast himself to the earth in contrition, and the Cross, that erewhile silly shameful wood, became his staff and spear and shield.

In those days they moved promptly. The next scene

shows us the betrothed pair kneeling before the altar. They are houselled side by side, and Schwanhilde, a second Magdalen, bedews her God with happy tears. "Christina" she is to be called henceforth; and when Diana's wood comes down, which it does forthwith, the little chapel which rises on the old temple's ruins is called Christina's Chapel, the village which rises under its shadow is Christina's Town—Christnach.

On the way to Christnach, ere you arrived, there was a strange thing, if only you knew and did not pass it. There is no book or sign to tell you of its existence, unless you know the people and talk with them. There is only one house on the way, a white lonely mill framed tall against the bosky right-hand slopes, with a garrulous brook parting it from the road. This is known as the Oelsmühle. It has not the air of a museum, but in a small sense it is that. He who is curious enough to stop here and pound stoutly at the door will generally find the miller's three little children at home. They will privately count him lunatic, for antiquarian curiosity is in this country regarded that way. But let him convey to them that he wants "stones", and they will descend to his intellectual level and show him round.

It is a quaint place. Rome's relics, unearthed in the neighbourhood, have been worked, by way of ornament, into its walls. On the right in the porch is embedded a stone from the foundations of St. Hubert's demolished chapel at Breitweiler hard by, picturing Mercury's winged head. On the further left the courtyard opens into an old spacious garden of dahlias, Canterbury bells, and roses; built into its rough-piled walls at intervals are columned niches, hearths, and window-bays eloquent of Roman life. Inside the mill-house coins of Commodus, Severus are hidden away, and other treasures, if the stranger be bold to

make the breach ; if he covet, he may even find the miller corruptible by quite small sums, but let him not quote myself as precedent.

But the children are beckoning. If he follow them a few hundred paces up the Wolfsberg height behind the mill, he will happen on the ancient home of some of these relics. There on the slopes, where was once a Roman road joining Breitweiler with Medernach, is the remnant of the ancient temple, a four-columned porch with arching roof and three steps, a grotto in the living rock ; right and left in the masonry are niches, and in one there lies loose a stone, with Janus-head facing both ways ; and at the back, between the columns, is this inscription :

ICH BIN, SLEH', EINER VILLA REST,
DIE IHREN STIEGEN, SÆVLENPAAREN,
VERTRAVEND IHREN ZINNEN FEST,
BEREITS VOR SLEBZEHN HVNDERT IAHREN
HIER KNAVF WIE ZIERSTEIN REIHEN LÆSZT.

Which German is thrown about like the rocks of the Müllerthal itself ; with the object that the sum of the big letters, taken as Roman numerals, might amount to 1863—the date of the inscription ; a favourite local conceit. The general sense, however, is clear ; the portion of the villa draws attention to itself as having stood, with confidence in its steps and pairs of columns, for 1,700 years. They call this *Heidenkapelle*, Pagan-Chapel. The coins found denote the second century ; the destruction belongs no doubt to the overflowing scourge of the fifth.

Other of the remains in the mill and garden are from the Hubertus-chapel at Breitweiler across the Erenz. In the new chapel are embodied the remnants of the old ; if the antependium be removed, the front of the altar is seen to consist of three sculptured stones. The one on the

Gospel side represents a female figure prostrate before an altar. It is Mania, Goddess of Night or Death ; she lurks kneeling before her altars, ready to snatch away the children or slaves offered to her. It is an interesting relic. For in the old Compitalia, the propitiatory feast of the second of May, revived by Tarquinius Superbus probably from still older times, boy-babies were actually offered, for the good of the family, to this goddess ; but at the beginning of the Republic heads of poppy and garlic were used in their place, or dolls wrapt in wool. The stone on the Epistle side represents three acanthus-leaves in triple frame ; on an inaccessible side of it is the legend

HERF
FECI. R

It is seemingly the capital of a doorpost. The middle stone is merely covered with scale-ornament.

Here, in this neighbourhood, where two Kehmen, or Roman roads, crossed one another, Rome's marks are legion. I have seen near Reuland a house, great part of which was a Roman hostelry ; it bears the legend *SUSTINE ET ABSTINE*. Not far from the cataract in the Müllerthal a remarkable burying-ground was unearthed. Fifteen rectangular stone coffins, full of bones and ashes, their lids engraved with St. Andrew's cross, bronze coins of Valens and Valentinian (364-378), a glass vessel like a holy-water stoup, a horsehair ring, and a semi-cylindrical stone, with the inscription

D.M.
GALLIONIO PLANCTO
DEFUNCTO SECUNDINIA
CVNIVX

It was a Christian cemetery, of that rich and great Secundine family which raised the column of Igel and other

monuments near the Moselle. This fine relic too has been broken up, and used in the repairing of a mill. But at a spot not far off, on the face of a rock, some twenty feet from the ground, there still remains the dark sculptured figure known to the people as *Der Schwarzer Mann*. Its right leg is lifted as in the act of walking, and both arms, raised high above the head, hold some object indistinguishable. It is probably the Nature-god Vertumnus, lord of the harvest, holding his basket of fruits and flowers.

South of Fels the four "Linster"—Altlinster, Bourglinster, Junglinster, and Graulinster—are set in the four corners of a sort of rhomboid or Great Bear, with Fels for tail. The figure lies roughly between the parallels of those two enamoured streams, Erenz Black and White; that wind, coquetting but never uniting, through Grûnewald and Mûllerthal, to the intercepting Sûre. Between Altlinster and Junglinster the flirting of the rivers grows serious; scarce a thousand yards dispart them, the ridge of their high watershed bowing almost to the plain as though to make their marriage-bed; but after this all-but-kiss they dance away, still virgin, to their widest, and the wilder, wayward stream seeks proud hiding in the rugged solitudes of the Mûllerthal.

"Linster" is the Celtic *lin*, marsh, and *ster*, river. The noble family that bore this name played great part in local history. From Bourglinster, where the ancient manor still sits stolid upon its jagged rock-tongue, they swayed the whole rectangle of forest, mead, and crag. A charter of 862 styles them "the high and puissant lords of Linceren". With all high doings of the dynasts of Luxembourg, in court, field, and council-chamber, their name weaves itself; their cross of gules and two six-rayed stars were widely feared and honourably borne. In the fourteenth century the Seigneurie passes by marriage into the hands of the

D'Orleys ; partitions ensue, and later the family of Metzenhausen obtains a share, then the Barons of Arnould and Soleuvre, ten families in all successively swaying, or sharing, the fief; until at length the last of the latter lineage sold the property to a private citizen of the capital some seventy years ago. So, in the modern mighty sea of Middle-Class, lordships founder and great names are drowned.

In the midst of a wide plain, watered by the White Erenz, straggles the flat village of Altlinster. I have been told by every one of my native friends hereabout that I must see "*De Man an d'Fra op der Lé*". That is what I have come to Altlinster for. Certainly I should not come to Altlinster otherwise. I seek out a *gamin* to conduct me to *De Man an d'Fra*. He brightens visibly when I open upon him with it. We cross the fields to the skirting woods, and entering a black tiny breach in the dense branches begin the ascent. It is a tedious climb; half wood and half wall, slippery with pine-needles and the matted leaves of all the autumns. My urchin has four feet and four hands. At length our way is barred by two massive rocks, thrice man's height, rising tree-girt from the steep. I look up, and there upon the face of the first is one of the oldest monuments of Celtic days.

It is "the Man and the Woman on the Rock". Framed high within a great bevelled square, roughly sculptured in gigantic relief upon the sandstone, they are battered and weatherworn with every wind and rain-flood that has beaten upon this forest since Aryan man, it may be, set foot here; each is clad in a stone garment reaching half-way down the leg; the Woman has a veil or wimple over her head, the Man, weather decreeing, is headless. My youthful guide is seemingly of opinion that the Man and the Woman are none other than our first parents themselves. I assure him that he is in error, as the costume belongs to quite a

different period. It is a great child-scrrawl of the Celt race, buried here in the aged forest even as is the babyhood of the people in oblivion. It may be that the artist—and I would fain know what he stood on—intended the woman for Hertha, the Ceres or Earth-goddess, and the man for Frey, or Mannus, or Teutates, god of intelligence or of war. Or it may be Hertha attended by her priest; or simply a gigantic Gallic tombstone picturing man and wife. Dr. Dasburg of Fels, the scholarly author of a monograph *Fels und seine Umgegend*, who swears by Alexander Wiltheim's *Luxemburgum Romanum*, assures me that the relic must be the tumulary monument of a noble Roman and his wife, the left-hand figure being the male with a *caputium* over his head, the right the female; with all deference to him, the savage roughness of the sculpture forbids me to suppose that for a moment. The other rock hard by is called *Freyll*, Freya's Rock; not far off is an excavation, known as *Haertigeswé*, or Hertha's Armoury. The main rock is called, from times forgotten, *Herthesley*, Hertha's Rock; or the word may mean simply Little-Forest-Rock, from *Herth-gesley* (*Harthgen* is Little Wood).

Behind the rock is a long narrow cleavage, just passable, plainly the old access, ending in the roughest of steps up to the summit. My urchin, whose soul, if any, must once have decorated a squirrel, is there already, guides my feckless hands and feet with guttural amusement ill-concealed; at risk of life I reach his side. In the rock's flat top there is a deep square hollow. The people, who hold stoutly to the view of a Druidic altar, have a tradition that the whole rock is pierced with a long narrow hole, for the drainage of the victims' blood. I could find no trace of such a hole. It seems far more likely that the Druids, who held in their mighty hands the reins of both Church and State, used this eminence as a sort of pharos, lighted here

their imperious signal-fire ; then would leap up the responsive blaze from every surrounding mountain, while the tribes, pouring into the vast plain of Altlinster, made them ready to festival or war. I observed afterwards that this white rock, jutting out above the trees, is visible from every part of the wide plateau to the eye that knows where to look for it, and, still more clearly, from the hills ; it strains not fancy, therefore, to surmise the Gallic clans foregathered for miles before the base of Hertha's altar, uplifting ten thousand hands in an oath of undying hate to Cæsar, while some brawny Indutiomar, his yellow mane floating in the wind, clad like a Highlander in parti-coloured apparel and brave with golden chains on neck and arms, reviewed their lines with stentor voice and stern blue eye. From this rock-pulpit of the sacred grove one's vision sweeps the plain ; at foot sprawls Altlinster with lazy spread of limbs : southward, Bourglinster, deep and dark in its rocky ingle of yonder Grünewald, woos the sun's opportunity ; eastward Behlenhof, securely radiant, salutes from its mountain-cone. For the moment I, a Druid arch-flamen, lift the sacrificial knife at whose gleaming mandate every warrior of the Trevirian host at my feet bows low over his plaited shield ; then, awaking from my antiquarian dream—a little to the relief of my small attendant, who has been watching me with some apprehension and is plainly not ready to be “offered on the service of my faith”—give the order of descent to common earth.

It is strange to reflect upon the unknownness of some of these legacies of Europe's rough minority ; odd clumsy toys relegated to high nursery-shelves and forgotten by all but a few fogies whose absorbed bookishness, remote from the world, is itself a sort of second childhood. One might have thought this curio worth some sort of preservation. It is the worse for wear, and not likely to improve ; for

the villagers say that at nutting-time the boys come and pelt with stones *d'schro Fra*—the Naughty Woman—who “has cut off her husband's head”. The rains have eaten it, moss and lichen have crumbled it; had not the whole monolith a certain forward tilt, the Man and the Woman would probably long since have been washed out of sight and mind together.

If, descending from this wood and going southwards across the plain, you leave the horn of river on the right where a tiny affluent joins it, and track this latter, you will reach the village whose artery it is—the antique, unchanged little Bourglinster. Here the plain ends deliberately in a severe right-angle of sandstone; the snowy township beams under its conscious grey-green safety; and the castle, lowlier than its kind are wont, leads the way in graciousness. Nature, here, is arch-architect. It is she who has set the style, overseen the craft, and in wise obedience to her there is no stone that the builders rejected, neither at head nor foot of the corner. Perhaps in those strange convulsions of earth's earliest strata, which upheaved her crust in the beginning, there worked some kindly prescience of those knights of Linster who were destined to entrench their sovereignty in this strong corner of the hills.

For here is a wide precipitous amphitheatre of natural masonry, from whose midmost curve, like a Jew's harp, springs forth a tongue of living rock; the tongue was meant for the castle's area, the deep space around it for the fosse. And in compliance with this plain intent the cunning artificers went about their work, insomuch that the château rises sheer from the three sharp vertical sides of the promontory, the end of it with its chapel and little minaret bowing down towards the village and guarded by a strapping grey round tower. To the eye, château and rock-tongue have been sliced downwards out of one great

piece. Behind, where the spur joins its continent, the natural ravine was continued artificially, so that nature's peninsula has been of art, in some sort, new-born an island; which dyke was anciently bridged, with double-towered defence. Everywhere is perfect adaptation to physical caprice; the roof of the long building is the tell-tale of its stony floor, dark gable running into gable each higher than the last, until the supreme crest of this mountain—cut out with and without hands—affronts heaven and the cliff.

So to another wide plateau, with bald Junglinster squat in a middle hollow. Here, my good friend M. Bourges of Fels had prayed me to go and see the Curé, whose local lore was encyclopædic, and whose pride in his church warmed one's soul to witness. To the Presbytery I repair. The little garden and windows all ablaze with flowers, the welcome of the smiling housekeeper, the rose-decked low parlour panelled with oak and breathing that peculiar country-cottage smell which absorbs memories and resembles fustiness only "as the mist resembles the rain", all win my sense to their gentle homely mood, and my heart goes out to embrace him coming ere he comes. Presently he shuffles in, the slippered simple good old priest, in his hand a *Hora Diurnæ*, in his eyes sleep; he has been nodding over Nones, but is soon full awake and honestly glad of a pretext to go to church. Dear old man! his countenance has known snuff, his soutane is darned, his biretta—like the memory of Hamlet the elder—is green; but his smile is a baby's, and light sits in his eye. "*Hierdurch!*" he says, and reaching for his stick has whisked me out into the effulgent garden and endless genealogies before I have had time to introduce myself.

It is a garish but spacious Renaissance church, built in 1770 by the curé of the day, who together with his people

put up the choir and worried stingy old Baroness Marie-Eve de Zizwitz, the then châtelaine, to do the rest. The ancient church adjoining was pulled down, and its life-sized effigies of generations of Metzenhausens and von Orleys transferred to the new ; where behind the high altar (which, with most of the saints' statues, comes from old Marienthal Abbey) they stand in formidable stony rank and full fig of vizor, chainmail, greave, ruffe, baldrick, doublet, and plume. Before I had left that old man I was considerably better posted in the intricacies of the Linster lairds than ever in the generations of my own kindred. Much more interesting was the demeanour of the old priest himself. He pointed out the beauties of his Sion with the fervour of a new saint in his heavenly mansion ; he caressed monument, column, candlestick and censer with the tenderness of a lover, would break off talk to trim a flickering sanctuary-lamp, pick out dead flowers from a vase, dust an aumbry with his cassock's tail. When, proudly taking down the framed diploma of the church's consecration, he spied cobwebs behind it, a look came over his wrinkled face which boded ill for the sacristan. I fear he deemed me dull, for I was thinking ; finding him better entertainment than all the Metzenhausens in the world ; wondering what he would do when he went to heaven and had no church to tend, and preen, and croon over ; whether he would ever ask leave and come back.

They are strangely beautiful things, these hid lives of village priests. Christening and preaching and shriving and sacring and burying they labour on, and the zeal of God's house has eaten them up, until in a few years they are carried into it for the last time and go to join the swelling roll whose names are in the Book of Life and the church porch, and another foot ascends the steps of the wonted altar at the awakening of the day and other lips murmur

Subvenite over other generations of the poor. And still the house stands on, though the plowman overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth the seed. But the house is not forgotten by the stewards dead and gone. Doubt not they intercede, if they cannot, as the poet conceits, interfere :

“ Saints go their rounds, who shall doubt ?

March, with the moon to admire,

Up nave, down chancel, turn transept about,

Supervise all betwixt pavement and spire,

Put rats and mice to the rout—

“ Aloys and Jurien and Just—

Order things back to their place,

Have a sharp eye lest the candlesticks rust,

Rub the church-plate, darn the sacrament-lace,

Clear the desk-velvet of dust.”

CHAPTER XV

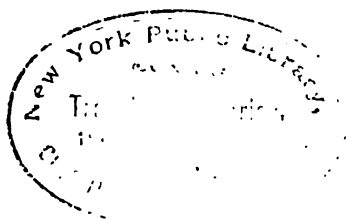
A PAGEANT OF RUINS

NOT far from Fels, in the centre of the country, two rivers throw themselves, at the same moment, into the arms of one. The two are Eisch and Mamer, the third Alzette, flowing northwards from the capital. The place of this pretty bigamy is a fertile plateau, called Mies, and ringed about with purple hills ; once, I am sure, a big lake ; in its midst, one long street by the Mamer, very sunny and sweet, lies the village of Mersch. Let him who would duly appreciate Mersch fish thither down the Eisch, if he can handle a rod among bushes, and arriving rich with that interior void which is one of the blessings of this country, demand, at the flower-bright hostelry of good M. Brandenburger-Kies, jugged hare and Diekirch ale, or tea and honey of Hymettus. Sitting in that garden, with the sapphire depth just visible overhead through trellised roof of honeysuckle and clambering wild-roses, he will recall old Isaak, and his "stomach excellent good" ; and will discover, when empty cup and platter announce the time of incense, that Mersch has insensibly stormed an outpost in his heart which it will forever hold.

Nereus, with trident of limpid, fishy streams, pointed out Marisca to the Romans as a site much to be desired. The plowman knows it to his cost, for with their substructures all the plain is mined ; whole fields must be quarried, ere virtue return to the soil ; round an area two hundred yards

by seventy the walls of an enclosure can be traced. Two outstanding objects announce Mersh from afar, its soul and spirit, evident landmarks from the hills. One is a tall church-tower, with oriental cupola; the other an ancient château-fort or feudal house, now a farm, whose four bleak stories, topt with pointed roof, out-tower the houses. As to this last, its entablature still bears the escutcheon of Johann-Friedrich von Autel, seigneur of Mersch, its pink walls are still surrounded by fosses, used now as gardens. A hundred years since, four towers flanked its angles, bristling with cannon; they are gone, and the donjon's character with them.

The other object is more interesting. Such a quaint, black-tiled, bulbous belfry, Muscovite in spirit, must bespeak a charming church. When you break in upon it and find there is no church, you feel quite piqued with the poor belfry. The church has flown away like the palace of romance, and left the tower sheer and square, a tall forlorn bewilderment. It was destroyed, this church, more than fifty years ago; but the King of Holland had a mother, born a Russian princess; and she requested that the tower might be left standing, because it brought to mind her native land. Round the corner is the present church, a mock-Greek outrage with Ionic columns. The old church, when it was pulled down, proved to be founded upon rows and rows of stone coffins, Gallo-Frankish, after their peculiar massive manner; the foundations themselves consisting of fair-sculptured Roman stones, from the quarries of Audunle-Tige. On these the curé-doyen Majerus, who was something in the antiquarian way, laid prompt hands, and piled them up artistically in the parsonage-garden. But heaven decreed otherwise, for the winds blew and the rains came, and began to corrode the delicate carven obscenities with which the good priest had hoped to delight his curio-loving



cronies ; so the stones were committed reverently to carts and carried off to Luxembourg Museum. Fitted together, they form the funeral monument of a young Roman warrior, who, however indelicate the minds of his executors may have been, was evidently a good husband, father, and patriot. A native professor has written scholarly Sapphics upon the relics. I quote the first and last verses.

*Mira spectatum properate Nymphæ ;
Ecce pugnaces edidere fœtus,
Membra disjectæ mutilata Roma,
Florida Tempe.*

*Hic jacet fortis sapiensque miles,
Integer sponsæ teneræ maritus,
Aedium custos vigil atque amica
Prole beatus.*

Christianity arrived, Mersch becomes a great parish, throwing out jurisdictional arms far and wide ; presented, with its church, in 853 to the Abbey of St. Maximin at Trèves by Countess Erkanfride ; of which donation many charters of confirmation are preserved, one as early as 960 styling Mersch "multis annorum curricula adscripta."

Four good miles from this bright trysting-place of three valleys, on the watershed parting the Attert from the Eisch, visible all round from afar for its strange shape and head towering above neighbour-hills, rises the peak called Help-erknap, Mount of Succour. It is a triangular prism, capped with a level table-land and dressed in skirts of green. Once, upon this flat summit, stood a presbytery and a church ; the church was blown away by a hurricane just a hundred years ago, and the house fell into ruin for great age. Near the summit is a miraculous spring, where was found an altar with figures of Hercules and Isis. At foot of the mountain is a tiny hamlet, Finsterthal, Dark Vale. Into this hamlet,

nearly a league from any village, desert and silent throughout the year, they flock in crowds from the vicinity and from Belgium and Prussia to hold noisy festival on the first Monday in May, with chaffering of cattle, trinkets, and other wares. The origin is lost in eld. Formerly the fair was held on the summit; when the church fell, it was transferred. In these regions I have heard the saying, *Alwé Helperknap*, old as the Helperknap fair. Everything, name (there is the alternative Heilberg, Holy Mount), shape, situation of the peak, points to the conclusion that this Helperknap, with its sacred fountain, was a sanctuary of Druids in their days.

On the bank of the Mamer, midway between the Eisch and the Alzette, stands the rock of Schoenfels. At its foot crouches Schindels village, on its brow, broad and high, rises a square donjon, crowned by a parapet with balustrade and stairway of stone; at every angle of this terrace in the air a turret bristles, and in the midst. It is the hold of the ancient sires of Scindalesheim or Schonevels. But the true Schoenfels is the lofty rock that dominates the fortress from the east; and touching this rock there is a story.

Long ago a châtelaine of Schindels (as the place was anciently called) accompanied one day her lord to the chase. With her went her little son Erhart, aged five years. Spring's brightest petals bloomed starlike all about their feet, the sun's blessing gladdened the earth, and the young mother's heart, as she followed with her eyes her darling at play, beat high with love and happiness. Suddenly the child, while gathering flowers for his mother, caught sight of a glorious butterfly, whose wings of purple and silver flashed in the sunlight like living jewels. With a cry of delight he gave chase. The mother, who had been watching the hunt, turned to speak to her child; he was no longer at her side. She called; no answer came. Running

hither and thither like one distraught, she stopped appalled at the verge of a sheer abyss of rock, some thirty fathoms deep, which barred her further passage. Was it possible? With an agonising shriek she called his name; only the echo of her own wild accents replied. Quelling a mad impulse, she sought means of descent, and ventured upon a giddy path traced by the deer among the brambles that lined the rock-side. Clinging with torn hands to thorn and twig—for mother's love casts out fear—she reaches the bottom of the precipice in safety, and utters a cry of thankfulness at sight of her dear one, sitting, all smiles, weaving a chaplet of flowers. Flying to his side, winding her arms about him, caressing him on lips and hands, she asks him how he has fared; whereupon, as though astonished at the passionate question, he answers, "*A beautiful man, all in white, caught me in his arms*".

Sobbing with joy and love, the mother vowed in her heart to consecrate to the Holy Guardian Angels a chapel, upon the spot where the miracle had taken place. This chapel, on the rock over against the castle, and facing the haunted Grotto of the Gnomes high in the opposite cliff, stands to-day, a calvary worn by the hands of time. It received the name of Schoenfels—the Rock Beautiful—and gave its name to the castle and the village. Underneath is an opening of the rock; if you dare the entrance, you may wander endlessly through the natural pillared corridors, under the woods and the plains; but I will not answer for any strange dread things that may be to adventure there.

Up the cliff, through the forest, past the old hermitage of St. Gengulfus, the way leads to a holy and still retreat, forgotten by the world, last Thule of the hills. But it is better to attain, by way of its own dainty valley, so choice a thing; its spiritual avenue lies not across hill and dale, but along the wavering, solitary channel of the Eisch. Between

the tilted woods that wall this long ravine a lawny band of grass, green and green, endures for miles ; along it winds from side to side the rivulet, brush-hidden, a shaggy serpent. Track this with me up stream from its confluence at Mersch, and you will feel the valley's expectant calm.

Just as this mood comes to meridian, you are drawing under a battlement which defied Louis the Fourteenth and scoffs at time, with all its orthodoxies of high Knights' Hall, chapel, towers, and *souterrains*—old Hollenfels, rising cloudwards cold and foursquare from a darkness of trees that seem to close your vista and end forever river and valley and all things. Let me not break your mood if I mention that Boufflers fired one shot, and one only, at this big beetling burg ; its mark is visible to-day ; and its result was that the Sire von Hollenfels came out on the ramparts and respectfully offered the Marshal his keys.

But turn left, then right, round the valley's elbow ; you will find that Paradise lies beyond the end of the world. Folded in the quiet hollow of the river's arm, a corner of unearthly peace and perennial silence, lies the Abbey of Marienthal—Mary's Vale—near the fountain of Himmelsborn, Heaven's Spring. Here on a sudden the world has stopped throbbing, like a silenced mill. Here the "garden enclosed" with its simple, holy precincts has for seven centuries, through time's change on change, through Protestant asphyxia and French vandalism, caught a strip of the river and sanctified it, as Jacob was blest by the Wrestler, ere it were let go upon its way. It is a dedicated stream that has flowed past us all this time. The old cloister-wall in good part remains, save where the great natural ramparts of sandstone take up its duty at the valley's angle ; there it runs up the height and stops ruined. Nature has thrown her arms round this sanctuary. It is a niche of flowers and stillness ; the mutter of the stream and the subtle

fragrance of consecration transfigure the flowers and syllabise the stillness. From the garden a high arched bridge, slight like the thread of a spider, leaps across the girdling stream to buttress itself in the heart of a slender tower springing from the grass ; in the long-ago there were three bridges, by the broken arch-spring this side and that ; how they served, who knows ? for the tower stands within the greater precinct. Come round to the abbey-gates, pull at the hanging iron cross.

To the clanging summons appears a tall, bronzed father. In beard and facial angle he is Richelieu made honest. Red fez, white habit and cowl, great black beads worn necklace-fashion, render him an imposing figure ; in mien and speech he is, *au bout des ongles*, the type of unexceptionable breeding particularly associated, in my experience, with monks. There is about him that air of serious kindness one marks in persons who are governed by the consciousness that they are not at all their own. Our interest unlocks at once his cultured, reserved graciousness. Walking in the many-coloured garden, he reflects upon past glories. This Abbey was founded by the pious lord of adjoining Mersch in 1230, not for monks, but for noble ladies. Formerly there had been a chapel here, with a clever image of Our Lady, which worked wonders ; hence the convent's name, Marienthal. Good Ermesinde endowed it richly, in that heyday of religious houses. Very wealthy it became, the wealthiest in the County ; and very select—the postulant must show her pedigree for fourteen generations. To have taken the veil here was to be *chic* ; not to have so done, distinctly *bourgeoise*. Counts Henry V., VI., and VII. added their patronage, until Marienthal, if gallantry permit the expression, became almost the rival of Echternach. It was here, a score years after the foundation, that the beautiful Yolande, the Count of Vianden's daughter, found asylum from a cruel home.

Declining flatly the suitor her parents would have forced upon her, and declaring her intent to become a religious, she was thrown into the dungeons of her father's castle at Vianden. After a struggle of two years between determined daughter and stupid mother, the latter gave in and authorised her to pronounce her vows at Marienthal; of which, in ten years' time, she became abbess. Having ruled thirty years, she had the joy, or otherwise, of opening the convent-doors to the aged lady, who came thither to end her days in peace. The abbey enjoyed its pious and aristocratic seclusion until 1783, when it was suppressed by Joseph II., that Austrian Henry VIII., and soon afterwards destroyed by the French. The Abbey Church has disappeared; four of its altars are in different churches of the country.

Our red-capped monk is a member of the Order of White Fathers of Africa, instituted by Cardinal Lavigerie in the eighties. Their mother-house is in Algeria; they have houses dotted about Europe—in France, Belgium, Germany; this little branch is the smallest, the baby. There is no house in England; but with Cardinal Vaughan's missionary seminary, St. Joseph's College at Mill Hill, they have conferred much and work hand-in-hand; "*j'ai bien connu le Cardinal Vag-ahn—on a de bons garçons à Milile*," says he, dauntless grave black eyes admitting some good thing come out of England. Here, in this quiet vale, they train boys to carry the power of the Cross into mid-Africa. There are the boys filing out of the chapel, all wearing the red fez. The Catholic Church does not accept, as apostles to the heathen, breezy curates suddenly inspired with a fancy for adventure. A dedicated life, long instruction, physical adaptation, arduous probation, are her terms. Her bishops *in partibus* do not, in the course of a home-holiday, combine business with pleasure by throwing the easy lasso of a hearty and graphic sermon or two round the necks of

half-a-dozen clerical youths raw from the universities and haling them back to civilise the untutored savage with tracts. Nor does she baptise, at sight and upon bribe of trousers and waistcoats, the astute child of Ham. He must undergo the trial and training of four years at least. If these methods were emulated by other zealots there would be less truth in the black adage, proverbial in South Africa, that there is no child of hell like the Christian Kaffir.

The White Father has been, he says, in Congo and Uganda, has fought, all around Victoria Nyanza's shores, the power of darkness. It all lives quietly in his face. On the great map of Africa, among the hide-shields, skins, and gleaming assegais grouped around the guest-room's mighty old hearth-place, the vigorous finger checked his spiritual campaigns. The vaults under the abbey, whose recent discovery maps out the entire plan of the ancient precinct, he indicated with antiquarian glow; and, leaping seven centuries, vaunted the electric light; they have harnessed their little prisoned strip of Eisch—"nous avons un petit moulin," he says—"v'là!" Thus lights this laughing stream the way into mid-Libyan darkness.

Further up the narrow valley, from a dizzy height, choked with intertangled jungle, the old wild ruin of Ansembourg looks down on the new château and forge. If conscience prompt so hard a climb, you will find the castle like a blasted city in the heart of a forest. Amid the assembly of the trees an ivy-giant, two hundred and fifty feet high and of fabulous age, is seigneur of the wood, constrains façade and rampart with polyp arms; in the chapel lie scattered the doleful debris of service; the vast keep hints satyrs and ghouls. A farming family, dwelling here more than two centuries, has successively dared the nightly sounds and sights of this fearsome place. They care no jot

for the unrestful Baron Philip of Ansembourg, who in a fit of jealousy poniarded his amiable spouse, and made bad worse by slitting the thread of his own ill-fated life. The present Count of Ansembourg lives in the palace below, by the forge ; which latter has its story. In the fifteenth century the title passed into the family of Rollingen on this wise. Sir Theodore de Rollingen, when a young man, built that forge. The incessant thud of the hammer was audible in the castle above ; the noble Ansembourg could not get a wink of sleep. After several afternoons' tossing he sent his esquire with a note to the effect that the din must be stopped, or he would see whether there were Middle Justice in Luxembourg. Rollingen sent back answer, "Tell your lord that this same forge will hammer away his castle." And it was not long before Rollingen wedded the sole surviving heiress of Ansembourg. This episode is understood to have been the canvas upon which Georges Ohnet worked out his romance, *Le Maître de Forges*.

But the valley, a little Rhine for ruins, has massive Simmern yet in store ; Simmern, Siebenborn, from the seven springs of living water which flow down rejoicing from its luxuriant hills ; much like the rest in celsitude and savage brokenness, but more formidable, and older—old, in parts, as Rome's day ; a real fortress, built or bettered for wardship from Norman and Hungarian pillage. The Revolutionary troops never bombarded it ; not through any lack of conscientiousness on their part, but because the work had been already accomplished ten years before, owing to the carelessness of a herdsman living in the stables, who set it on fire. The seigneurie was early held in feoff of the powerful Counts of Arlon ; but Thomas of Septfontaines, the hero of the house, round whose head story gathers, was a devoted vassal and comrade-in-arms of Henry VII. of

Luxembourg. When that ambitious prince received the imperial purple, the change in his fortunes did not cool the loyal heart of Thomas. Companion of his bosom in mediocrity, he was no fairweather friend, to desert him in grandeur. He followed Henry to the top of the tree, and like Fluellen thought no shame to be seen with him, diadem or no diadem. It was in the arms of Thomas that the pious Emperor expired at Buonconvento ; whither he had gone upon one of those Italian expeditions in which Germany for centuries spent vainly so much force and blood.

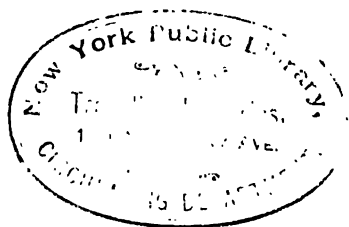
The story went about that Henry had been poisoned ; and suspicious tongues whispered of a doctored Host, administered to him by his Dominican confessor, Father Bernardin of Monte-Pulciano, under bribe of the kings of France, Naples, and Navarre. This, Thomas said, was a foul slander. He went home to Simmern, resolved to devote his remaining years to prayer for the soul of his imperial friend, which, people began to say, must have sorely needed it ; and, taking Holy Orders with the same easy grace with which he had taken everything else that came within his reach, offered himself the light post of chaplain to his own castle, and was accepted without references. It was Thomas who raised that remarkable little parish-church of Simmern, with its low massive columns and round arches, twelfth-century Gothic though built in the fourteenth, after a church which had struck him on the Roman expedition ; that Sepulchre-group which adorns the choir, roughly-carven but of faces all alive, is his own family ; the noble melancholy Christ wears the features of the great Henry VII. of Germany and Luxembourg. To the day of his death, if anyone dared to mention that poisoned Host story in his presence, Thomas would burst out in a storm of dramatic indignation ; by way of protest, he wore daily at the altar the vestments in which the

maligned monk had given Henry his viaticum ; though no one ever felt quite sure how he got possession of them. The natural result of this marked policy was that the "slander" promptly became immortal ; which was possibly just what the squarson of Simmern intended. I don't want to doubt Thomas. People could be curiously complex in those old light-hearted days.

As I drive back past peaceful Marienthal I catch sight of my White Father, reciting his office in the Abbey garden, a tall ghost moving in and out among the hollyhocks and roses. The sun has gone down behind the cloistering hills, and the evening is cool and full of sweetness. He removes his fez with low, courtly bow ; then, replacing it, waves a blessing hand.

And here I too offer the reader, with the hope that he may have indulged my garrulity as cordially as I have enjoyed his company, my respectful farewell.

THE END



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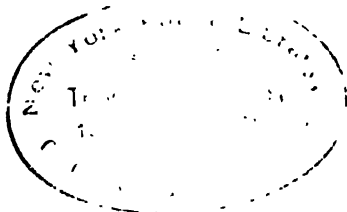
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